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Kuwait: Electoral Campaign Coverage

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Near East & South Asia

Kuwait

Electoral Campaign Coverage

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Election To Be Overseen by 165 Committees

92AE0674C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 2 Sep 92 p 4

[Article: "Kuwaiti Elections To Be Overseen by 165 Committees; 183 Candidates Registered in Two Days; New, Transparent Polling Boxes To Be Used"]

[Text] Kuwaiti police stations in the 25 electoral districts continued to receive applications from individuals wanting to run for office in the election that will be held next 5 October. It was announced yesterday that 63 individuals had filed applications to run for office in the election. Thus, in two of the 10 days designated for applications to be filed by those who wish to run for office, the number of candidates for office rose to 183. On the first day, 120 applications were filed.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that 165 committees have been approved to oversee the elections: 25 of these committees are primary committees, and the rest are secondary. New polling boxes have been prepared for the elections. These boxes are different from those that were used before the invasion. The right and left sides of these new boxes will be covered with glass. Observations were made on the record by some candidates who noted that a number of them had not registered because their old citizenship cards, which are red, had been replaced by new citizenship cards, which are black. These candidates were not registered based on the pertinent provisions that are now in effect and that were approved by the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Interior had announced that no Kuwaiti would be allowed to vote unless he had the new citizenship card.

The fourth electoral district, al-Da'iyah, had the largest number of candidates who had filed their applications on the first day: 12 candidates. Only one candidate filed his application in al-Subayhiyah, the 23d electoral district; in al-Fuhayhil, the 24th district; and in Umm al-Hayman, the 25th district. Jalib al-Shuyukh, the 17th district, had the distinction of being the district where the first application for candidacy was filed. The first candidate to file was Fadil Fahd Mish'an al-'Anzi.

Many of those who had filed applications to run for office noted the efforts that had been made by the state and by authorized agencies in the arrangements to register the candidates for the elections. In that regard, Ahmad al-'Adasani, minister of electricity and water, declared that the agencies in the ministry that are involved in this matter would start accepting the candidates' applications today for electricity service at their temporary election headquarters. A security deposit of 10 dinars would be paid with the application.

In the meantime, sources in the Ministry of the Interior denied what was said about a movement to bestow citizenship on approximately 35,000 non-Kuwaitis. These sources said that a policy of granting Kuwaiti citizenship collectively was absolutely unacceptable and that it was not approved by the government. The government will not adopt an approach or pursue a policy in the future that would alter the makeup of the country's population.

According to information given to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, a meeting of the Supreme Committee for Citizenship Affairs was held yesterday and chaired by Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud, interior minister. This meeting, which was attended by committee members, all of whom are duly qualified ministers, did not look into the matter of bestowing citizenship on a certain number of individuals who have no citizenship, the "biduns." Instead, those who took part in the meeting looked into many subjects and explored public policies, but they issued no decisions.

This information noted that the process of fingerprinting those individuals who have no citizenship is still under way. The purpose of the fingerprinting, however, is not to bestow citizenship upon those individuals, but rather to determine the number of those individuals who have no citizenship and compare their fingerprints with those taken before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Nominations Close as Divisions in Forum Appear

92AE0674B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Sep 92 p 4

[Article: "Random Shots Near the Palace of al-Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah: Race Between Hundreds of Kuwaiti Candidates Heats Up"]

[Text] The deadline for declaring one's candidacy in the Kuwaiti elections is next Wednesday, and the race between hundreds of candidates for the 50 seats in the National Assembly will begin after that. Meanwhile, news about differences within the Democratic Forum heated up the election campaign, raising its temperature to an unusual level. Should such "divisions" spread to other forces, the implications on the election campaign next 5 October will be significant. Each candidate will try to do the maximum to promote himself, and some candidates may even use computers in their campaigns.

The important election event of the past [few] hours after Ahmad al-Rub'i declared his candidacy for the eighth district was his departure from the Democratic Forum to run as an independent in the elections. This event coincided with the return to Kuwait of Hamad al-Jaw'an, a candidate for the second district. Mr. al-Jaw'an returned from abroad after spending one and a half years in therapy, recovering from an assassination attempt that was carried out against him at the entrance to his home immediately after the liberation of the country.

It was in this climate of campaigning that Kuwaiti circles became preoccupied yesterday with news that random shots were fired at approximately 2100 the day before yesterday near the People's Palace where Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, the amir's deputy and crown prince, was meeting with a group of citizens. This was

one of several meetings the crown prince is holding with popular activists. The Ministry of the Interior made it clear in a statement that this was an incident in which several random shots were fired. Afterwards, the amir's guards dealt with the source of the shots, and necessary measures were taken in the area to apprehend the perpetrator. The ministry's statement, which was issued to shed light on the situation, indicated that its aim was to put an end to those who were spreading rumors about this matter.

In a separate security incident, one citizen was killed, and another was injured in the course of an argument with a third person. The argument occurred at 2200 the day before yesterday in the area of al-Riqqah, the 22nd electoral district. The perpetrator, who had used a firearm, was apprehended. Security sources did not declare what the causes of the argument were, nor did they declare the circumstances that were related to the incident.

Al-Da'iyah, the fourth electoral district, remains the district with the largest number of candidates: 16 candidates until yesterday. Meanwhile, the election campaign is heating up in the remaining districts. Most candidates have completed the task of putting their election committees together, and they did what they had to do in their publicity campaigns to promote their candidacy in the press, in panel discussions, and in posters. In addition, they set up their tents or their "election headquarters" in the electoral districts where each one of them is running for office.

Al-Rub'i Explains Leaving Democratic Forum

92AE0674A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Jasim al-Shimri: "Al-Rub'i Inaugurates His Campaign Headquarters; Declares: 'My Departure From the Democratic Forum Is Caused by Difference in Points of View'"]

[Text] Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i, an eighth district candidate in Kuwait's elections, said that the struggle in Kuwait was a struggle about the government and not about the regime. In a speech at the inauguration of his campaign headquarters, he called on the government to protect democracy, and he demanded that government officials be chosen by members of the National Assembly. He said that was in keeping with the memorandum that interpreted the Kuwaiti Constitution. He made it clear that the responsibility for protecting the next assembly would be shared jointly by the representatives and by the government. He said that his departure from the Democratic Forum was caused by a difference in points of view, but he did not elaborate on that difference.

Dr al-Rub'i also answered a question about his position on the application of Islamic law. He said: "The question whether one supports or opposes the application of Islamic law should not be asked during the election campaign. After all, we are in an Islamic society. We do, however, support the application of Islamic law in the context of an integrated social and political program whose foundations are clear and whose principles are constant in every field."

Government Declares Total Neutrality in Elections

92AE0674D London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Sep 92 pp 1, 4

[Article: "Six Military Men Among Kuwaitis Running for Office; Government Declares Total Neutrality in Coming Parliamentary Elections"]

[Text] The Kuwaiti Government affirmed its total neutrality in the National Assembly elections that will be held 5 October. The Kuwaiti Government also affirmed that it would make every effort to provide a quiet and peaceful climate for the election period.

The government said that it would give the people the freedom to choose their representatives in the National Assembly. It said that the experiments in democracy that Kuwait has had proved that the government was interested in the integrity of the elections and the absence of any intervention whatsoever in those elections.

Dr. Badr al-Ya'qub, Kuwait's minister of information and the official spokesman for the government, will have a press conference before noon today to explain the government's position on the elections. He will outline the preparations that were made by his ministry for covering the elections.

The minister said: "The publicity plan took total neutrality into account to ensure that the elections are honest and free and that they bring about the aspirations of the Kuwaitis."

People who aspire to win a seat in the National Assembly continue to file their applications to run for office, while many others continue to deliberate and weigh matters before making their final decision about whether to throw or not to throw their hats in the ring. The Elections Department has called upon those who are waiting to make their decision, asking them to take steps to file their applications to run for office and not to delay those steps until the short period of time that remains before the deadline, which is the end of business hours on Wednesday, the day after tomorrow. The Elections Department described that period as "a deadly time."

Election circles expect filing activities to intensify in the next 48 hours, especially by those who are still dragging their feet and have not filed their applications to run for office, waiting until the last minute because of "election tactics." Such considerations are lost early in the application filing period and at the time of the deadline when the importance of filing and its sensationalism are equally important.

So far, Umm al-Hayman, the 25th district, is the only district that has been relieved of the atmosphere of the election campaign. The number of candidates in that district is still two. Unless a third candidate comes forward to compete with them, their candidacy will not be contested, and they will win the election.

Recently, the spotlight of the campaign has been focused intensely on the seat of the speaker of the National Assembly. The most likely candidates for that seat are three: Ahmad al-Sa'dun, the former speaker of the National Assembly; Jasim al-Khurafi, the former minister of finance; and Jasim al-Saqr, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the National Assembly from 1981 to 1985.

Among those who filed applications to run for office are politicians and economists and people who work in finance and in professional associations. Some of them had held seats in previous National Assemblies, and some of them had run in previous election campaigns. Some are trying their luck once again, and some are entering the campaign for the first time. They are counting on the social, political, and economic changes that Kuwait has been experiencing since the Iraqi invasion and the postliberation period.

This group of candidates also includes officers who had declared that they intended to run for office. Afterwards, the minister of interior decreed that their resignation from the military corps would be accepted. Those officers who were named in the decree are: Brigadier General 'Abd-al-'Aziz Khalid al-Mikhlid, Major Fahd Duhayman al-'Azimi, Major Ya'qub Hasan al-Fadalah, Captain Hamud Sa'ud al-'Azimi, Captain 'Abd-al-Salam Manahi al-'Usaymi, and Major Barak al-Dawsari.

In one incident that attracted attention, the signs and election posters for Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i, candidate in the eighth district, were destroyed in activities that were described by some electoral circles as a sabotage operation carried out by someone who wanted to sow discord in the midst of voters' and candidates' ranks.

The Ministry of Interior is continuing its investigation and its inquiry to uncover the circumstances under which an explosive, which targeted a record shop in the area of Khaytan, was detonated. The store owner, Khalid al-Mutayri, described the explosion as a criminal act aimed at disturbing the peace and creating unrest among the people of Kuwait.

Candidates Announced, Platform Declared

92AE0674E London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 9 Sep 92 pp 1, 4

[Article: "Al-'Uthman Expects the Future of Kuwait To Be Reshaped; Electoral Lists To Be Completed Today"]

[Text] Dhari al-'Uthman, minister of state for Kuwaiti cabinet affairs, affirmed that democracy was not new for Kuwait. In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT he said that Kuwait had started getting rid of everything that the Iraqi aggression had left behind. He said that the government had made all of the appropriate preparations so that the elections can proceed peacefully and steadily.

Al-'Uthman hoped that everyone will have learned something from the lesson of occupation. He hoped that an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation will prevail among the people of the same country, just as it did in the past when Kuwaitis were united in rejecting the occupation.

The minister of state expected that the elections will redefine the characteristics of Kuwait in the future.

The final number of candidates will be determined today. That number had risen yesterday to 287 after 14 individuals filed their official applications to run for office. According to the deadline determined by law, no more applications can be filed after noon today. The election campaign for political forces and blocs and for independent candidates will start after the deadline for filing, and the race will continue until 5 October.

In this regard, some of these forces and many candidates completed their programs and the platforms upon which they were running for election. The Democratic Forum announced two nights ago that it was entering the elections with a list of eight candidates who would be running for office in various districts.

'Abdallah al-Nibari, secretary general of the Forum, denied there was any split within the ranks of the Forum, and he affirmed that Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i had chosen to run as an independent.

Al-Nibari said that the Forum would support al-Rub'i as well as Ahmad al-Dayn, the Forum's candidate in the eighth district.

Al-Nibari announced the names of the candidates on the Forum's list of candidates. That list includes Dr. Ahmad al-Khatib, ninth district; Jasim al-Qitami, third district; Sami al-Munis, 10th district; 'Abdallah al-Nibari, the 13th; Ibrahim al-Yusuf, fifth district; Ahmad al-Dayn, eighth district; Mubarak al-'Adwani, the 16th; and Khalid al-Wasmi, the 13th district.

Al-Nibari said that the Democratic Forum's platform had three main bases: strengthening security, firmly establishing the foundations of democratic government, and achieving human development.

He pointed out that the platform devotes special attention to national security inside the country and abroad, linking the security of Kuwait with the existence of stability throughout the region. The Forum's platform calls for an affirmation of Kuwait's affiliation with that which is Arab and that which is Muslim.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Constitutional Movement revealed its platform and declared that it would enter the coming elections with six candidates. They are engineer

Mubarak al-Duwaylah, the 16th district; Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti, the eighth district; engineer Muhammad Muhsin al-Busayri, the 20th district; Hamud al-Rumi, the sixth district; Sa'd Jam'an al-'Azimi, the 23d district; and Shabib al-Maqbul.

Shaykh Jasim Muhalhal al-Yasin, the movement's secretary general, announced that the movement "would support a number of other candidates," and he identified six bases for "giving the opposition an Islamic character." These are:

- To the movement, the notion of opposition is based on a methodology of justice and on defining what is right and what is wrong.
- The goal of the opposition is the interest of the public.
- The opposition is based on legitimate rules.
- The opposition relies on the [proposition] that difference of opinion is not mutually exclusive with friendliness, affection, and giving and taking advice.
- In dealing with the ruler, the opposition is to adopt an advisory rather than a derisive posture.
- The concept of the opposition is connected to change on the official and popular levels.

The most salient observation on the nominations process yesterday was something similar to an election offensive, when four individuals outside the district of Umm al-Hayman filed applications for their candidates to run for office in that district, thereby ending the expectations, which were expressed early during the filing period, that the candidates who were running in that district would be the first candidates in the history of Kuwaiti elections to win an uncontested race.

Security Major Subject of Debate

92AE0674H London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 9 Sep 92 p 32

[Article by Ghunaym al-Mutayri from Kuwait]

[Text] The circumstances and global and regional atmosphere surrounding Kuwait these days, and the rising drumbeats of war just kilometers away from its northern borders, are having a clear effect on Kuwaiti election discourse. New measures, standards, and slogans have been created that were never present in any of the elections preceding the Iraqi invasion on 2 August 1990.

It is not difficult to discover the the variety of concerns that burden both voters and candidates and trouble Kuwaiti citizens of varying political, social, tribal, and sectarian persuasions. Adherence to the Constitution is one of the givens at whose gate everyone is knocking or trying to talk about. Adherence to democracy seems to be the one tenet that animates both the government and the various political powers. The government, speaking through one of its most prominent supporters, has said on numerous occasions, "The elections are taking place on time, according to the democratic agreement ratified by both sides." The two sides' commitment to hold elections is clear. The government is realizing what it wants from them to complete the coming experiment on 5 October, and on the other side there is unprecented movement and activity on the part of the political forces, be they close to the government or in conflict with it, to play their part in the process.

Much is said about the election debates, and everyone talks of the great fears and misgivings.

List of Fears

Most of the talk at the diwaniyat [unofficial popular gatherings], programs, and debates is of the security question, domestic and foreign. In the depths of people's hearts, "Iraqi ambitions" in Kuwait occupy a wide, crucial place in the shape of the Baghdad regime. Security conditions, as Engineer Muhammad al-Basiri (Old Jahra' candidate) said in one of his election debates, still have not stabilized. The near future gives signs that changes are coming to the region.

Al-Basiri differed with some, who think that security conditions stabilized in Kuwait with the mere signature of a group of security agreements with friendly countries, most importantly the United States. Therefore, he added, Kuwait must study its strategic depth and design its policy in cooperation with the Gulf countries.

In domestic security, the question of national unity heads the list of concerns and priorities in election discourse. Everyone calls for it to be made stronger and deeper because it is the only way to social stability. Mubarak al-Duwaylah, Sixteenth District candidate, thinks that after the liberation, national unity was changed and shaken at a time when conditions should have settled, instead of the standards of national unity retreating.

Al-Duwaylah said, "Most of us have weapons at home, and some homes have machine guns, rifles, and hand grenades. Still other homes have antiaircraft guns." He added, "Today there are lethal weapons in our homes because of our feelings of insecurity. The fear is not of what is outside, today the fear is of us and in us."

After the security fear, other fears are minimal. The fear that the what happened to the National Assembly in 1975 and 1985 will happen to the next National Assembly, that it will be suspended and disbanded, may be handled by this Assembly, by settling upon in the way of distributing power among its groups or through an agreement that might be concluded among these powers and the executive authority on formulas for dealing and cooperation, to remove the "disbandment sword" from the Assembly's neck and the fear of forming a population structure, ways of spending public funds, and a building policy that might be squandered. Security doubts still dominate the priority concerns and fears on the election scene today.

Election tents, like the candidates' main headquarters, are going up in the public squares and among the regions of Kuwait. At the major intersections, banners are aloft,

calling on voters to support this person or the other in the battle. Election program booklets are distributed in bulk. Alliance and polarizing maneuvers are in full swing. It is only a matter of days until election day, which will be full of surprises. The difficult cards are being held by the candidates for the few hours from now until ballot boxes are opened for the voters.

More Than 300 Candidates Battle for Election

92AE0674F London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Sep 92 p 1

[Article: "302 Candidates, Mostly Independent, Running for Election in Kuwait"]

[Text] The only surprise yesterday that coincided with the deadline for filing the candidates' applications for the elections was this: The surprise that had been anticipated and expected by those who are involved in the election campaign, by some political forces, and by many of the candidates did not happen.

By the time yesterday's deadline for filing arrived, 15 new candidates had filed their applications. Thus, the total number of candidates who may run in the elections scheduled for 5 October is 302. The candidates represent a homogeneous mix of the tendencies and forces that can be found on the political scene in Kuwait after liberation.

Now that applications to run for office can no longer be filed, the campaign shifts to the candidates' campaign headquarters. The municipality has so far designated 255 locations for these headquarters, where many gatherings, seminars, and lectures will be held. There, the candidates will talk about the issues and programs that they wish to talk about, and they will define the positions they will take in the National Assembly. It is known that many of these locations will provide the candidates with opportunities to gauge their abilities to compete and to weigh the possibilities of forging alliances and supporting each other.

It is expected in this regard that Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud, minister of the interior, will issue a decree defining the locations of the Elections' Committees' principal and secondary offices. It has been said that there will be 165 committees and that 25 of them will be principal committees where candidates will be able to file their applications to establish their delegations and their deputies in the committees. The Elections Department will issue special identification cards for these people after that and after they are registered by their candidates.

One of the campaign headquarters that is to be opened in the next few days is that of Mr. Jasim al-Saqr, a candidate in the third district. The opening of Mr. al-Saqr's campaign headquarters, which will be next Sunday evening, is to be closer to a political rally for the forces that ran in the elections of Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry and achieved a sweeping victory at that time against Ahl al-Dayrah's competing list. It was stated that 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Saqr, president of the chamber, will deliver a speech to inaugurate the headquarters. It is known that candidate Jasim al-Saqr is one of the candidates whose names are being mentioned in the race for the seat of the speaker of the next National Assembly.

The course of the campaign would have continued to be quiet and without turbulence had it not been for a few violations that occurred in some of the districts where candidates, about whom an agreement had been reached in secondary elections, declared their candidacy. If this had not happened, the balance of powers among the contestants, where independent candidates constitute a majority, would not have been subjected to fundamental factors that would sway that balance after the possibilities faded that broad coalitions could be established between political movements and forces that had stood on the sidelines of the opposition until now.

Campaign circles observed that the candidates of those forces who are heading "the opposition" were expected to have a presence in the race that would parallel their political activity and their activity in the media since the liberation. If those candidates win, those forces heading the opposition will have nothing more than a force of limited influence in a parliament that is primarily made up of independent candidates and new representatives whose positions and parliamentary actions will be determined first and foremost by a set of domestic interests and considerations.

Campaign circles expect that the final number of 302 candidates, which was reached yesterday, will decrease. It is being said that a few candidates in more than one district will withdraw in favor of other candidates. It is also being said that such a step will continue to be linked with the volume of alliances, blocs, and bargaining activity that will dominate the course of the campaign in each district.

Citizens Called To Help With Security

92AE0674I London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Sep p 12

[Unattributed report on a press conference by Kuwaiti Information Minister Dr. Badr Jasim al-Ya'qub]

[Text] Minister of Information Dr. Badr Jasim al-Ya'qub emphasized the security issue in a press conference held last Monday on the occasion of the approach of parliamentary election day. In his view, the one misgiving that might galvanize all agencies of the government is the safeguarding of Kuwait's security, both from an outside enemy and from enemies within.

Minister Ya'qub said, "Security is the goal of all the government's agencies. A state without security cannot be stable; our priorities, as far as Kuwaiti society is concerned, are, equally, achieving security, then, achieving security, and finally, achieving security.

Adding that the Interior Ministry is committed to achieving security for every voter and every candidate so that everyone can reach the ballot boxes freely and honestly."

Minister Ya'qub said that the Information Ministry has invited a large number of Arab and foreign journalists to cover the election battle, which will be carried out in full view. The citizens also have a role and a commitment in the election battle, because in terms of results, it is only the citizens and the nation that will be affected. It is up to citizens to take part in achieving election security, and the nation's security in general, by hindering anyone who tries to injure the election process, by being completely alert, and by notifying the responsible authorities in the Interior Ministry of any person who might be suspected of wanting to hinder the elections or disturbing their peace.

The minister confirmed that the government, as usual, was always considered a neutral party in such matters and that the government had not amended the elections law. It left these matters to the next National Assembly to take the appropriate action.

Candidates' Views on Democracy

92AE0674J London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Sep 92 p 3

[Text] The parliamentary experiment in Kuwait has gone through many stages and stands today before a new stage. Observers agree that it will be very different in many ways from its precedents. This importance of this phase and its special quality come from its coming directly after fateful events that left their mark on various aspects of activity in Kuwait.

Directions—or, as is often said, "the winds of the Kuwaiti ship"—in the new phase that began the day of Kuwait's liberation—differ in form and content from those preceding the Iraqi occupation of the country. Concerns differ widely, and the political, economic, and social climates are pervaded by change.

But some still expect the Kuwaiti democratic experiment—in its new phase—to face some of the weakness that its progress suffered in the past, chiefly the dissolution of the National Assembly in the 1976 and 1986 elections. They wonder if these weaknesses will recur, so this question has been posed in the vast ongoing preparations for the current elections, scheduled to be held this 5 October.

Ahmad al-Dayn, Democratic Forum candidate from the eighth district, addressed this by saying that "more than one interruption of the course of parliamentary life in Kuwait has occurred in the last three decades. The opposition resigned its membership in the first National Assembly in 1965, then marred the elections of 25 January 1967 and the fate of the sixth National Assembly on 3 July 1986. There has been more than one attempt to revise the Constitution in a way other than the ordained constitutional way."

Balance of Power

Then he added, "If there is anyone who ascribes the reasons for this interruption and the stumble in the constitutional and parliamentary course to certain practices, these reasons are not of the substantial kind that stands behind this interruption and stumble. In my opinion, the most important reason is some people's lack of conviction in democracy and the opposition of their interests to the process of democratic development."

Al-Dayn thinks that "the balance of power at home in the geopolitical environment was not always suitable for the process of democratic development and the popular forces in Kuwait lacked, for long periods, open political organization, which is one of the formative elements of democracy and one of the bulwarks of its protection.

Article 50

"In numerous cases the excuse of 'noncooperation' has come up between the legislative and executive powers as a reason for dissolving the National Assembly, but some understood this 'cooperation' to be aimed at ensuring the executive power's hegemony at the expense of the role of the legitimate authority of the National Assembly. Cooperation between authorities must be according to Article 50 of the Constitution; otherwise it will lead to the hegemony of one power over the other."

The Cornerstone

Mubarak al-'Adwani—a 16th district candidate—believes that the Kuwaiti Constitution, which is the cornerstone of the democratic experiment, came about through remarkable historical circumstances that gave it its distinctive identity. It requires that the current experiment start out from the circumstances that accompanied the democratic course as defined in the Constitution of 1962. Although democratic representation along modern lines had begun, the Constitution was promulgated at a time when the phase of national liberation movement was at its peak. It played a part—to a great extent—in realizing important gains in the people's interest in the time of the uprising that was led by the leadership of the nationalist trend.

Also, the demands of the [Iraqi] regime of 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim from Kuwait directly after independence played an important role in reaffirming the democratic identity of the Kuwaiti Constitution. The historical phase required the political authority in Kuwait to put forth basic ideas to banish any doubts about the Kuwaitis' adherence and connection to a political framework to confront the designs of 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim, in addition to the fact that the presence of the late Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Salim, the circumstances of his youth, and his involvement with attempts to reform that preceded

the Constitution had an important effect on the way the scales balanced in favor of democratic gains for the Kuwaiti people.

In al-'Adwani's view, democracy is not merely a National Assembly or parliament; democracy may develop and take root by building institutions in civil society: unions, popular committees, and parties. These institutions began to spread in the 1960's during the rise of democracy, although they speedily ran into real difficulties in the mid-1970's.

It is not surprising that the first resolution after the dissolution of the National Assembly in 1976 was to dissolve the Istiqlal [Independence] Club, turning it into a club for the handicapped, and to diminish the role played by the National Union of the Students of Kuwait.

Some people say, as well, that the 1985 Assembly hastened its dissolution through the mistakes its members made. The truth, known to all, is that the proportional structure of the 1985 Assembly was one of the reasons that led to its dissolution.

In summary, the democratic experiment in Kuwait will develop and strengthen because events have proven that democratic development and popular participation are among the most important conditions for security and stability in the region. Democratic systems are those that do not embark on adventures such as those Saddam Husayn undertakes all of the time. They are the only governments that respect human beings and do not use them as fuel for some individuals' adventures.

Social Foundations

Lawyer Salah al-Hashim thinks that "if one follows the subject of democracy in Kuwait, it is always incumbent on him above all else to be armed with a life-style in a society such as Kuwaiti society and submit to its social foundations for a number of traditional, political, and even economic considerations." He said that "democracy in Kuwait is as old as the establishment of the first legislative assembly in 1921 and the political and popular movements that came before it. Thus the Kuwaiti people's concept of democracy preexisted; it was not linked to a wish to implement democracy, only to apply and practice it, as much as it was the wish of the political forces at that time to obtain the right to participate in government.

"Despite the development of the method of popular participation from the establishment of the constituent assembly in 1938 until the dissolution of the National Assembly in 1976, we are unable to say that Kuwait has witnessed the growth of the democratic process. The government in Kuwait, despite its having assumed power democratically, having been chosen by the people, makes the clash of Kuwaiti political forces an inevitability."

Stick and Carrot

Al-Hashim was asked what this means. He replied that, "Very concisely, the ancients understood the fundamentals of the political game, and they practiced them according to their principles. These were principles that did not come out of a void; they came from the idea that popular right is taken, not given." He alluded to the "circumstances" of the 1967 elections and the dissolution of the 1976 and 1986 Assemblies, indicating that "political forces—the engine of the political scene—had not used the tool of the Assembly and the democratic movement in Kuwait. Article 107 of the Constitution was used only to dissolve the National Assembly in 1976 and 1986." He said: "We're through with this, although faith in democracy is besieged between the stick and carrot, according to the power and reaction of the people."

Interests and Contradictions

Now, with the momentum of the elections and ongoing dialogues, can we say that the Kuwaiti political scene is able to absorb global changes, the spread of democracy, the authority of the people, and its application locally?

Al-Hashim said: "This question takes us back again to what extent we may say that the Kuwaiti Government believes in the principle of democracy. I constantly wonder whether some popular political leaders, too, believe in democracy as a way of life and work, or if democracy is the name they give to their interests, contradictions, and the benefits despite which, when they appear, hopes are let down and attention flags?"

Al-Manna': Several Reasons

Dr. 'Ayid al-Manna' said: "There are several reasons for the democratic experiment in Kuwait to stumble. When we speak of this experiment, we confine ourselves to the experiment after independence in 1961, the phase in which Kuwait became an independent state with soveriegnty appealing to a written constitution and ruled by written methods. Thus the second democratic phase began, after the first phase, which went back to 1938, with the election of the constituent assembly in October 1961, which produced the current Constitution, published in November 1962. The Constitution separated, for the first time, the three authorities—legislative, executive, and judicial—from one another, and at the same time reaffirmed the need for these authorities to cooperate.

Al-Manna' said that in spite of the fact that the National Assembly must exist, in legislative and monitoring terms, its absence does not represent a crucial worry for the Kuwaiti people. The situation economically is relatively comfortable, especially before the Iraqi invasion, when it was possibile to wait, and the possibility of action against measures to remove parliamentary life was very limited.

Hamad al-Jaw'an Calls for Raising Banner of Islam

92AE0674G London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Nasir al-Mutayri and Khalid al-'Abbad in Kuwait]

[Text] The opening of the election headquarters for the candidate of the Second District (al-Mirqab), Hamad 'Abdallah al-Jaw'an, yesterday evening enjoyed a large popular turnout. Al-Jaw'an recently returned to Kuwait after receiving medical treatment in the United States after an assassination attempt after the liberation of Kuwait left him partially paralyzed.

On this occasion, Jaw'an held a symposium, "These Are My Country's Values," in which he promised to raise the banner of Islam and peace in Kuwait: Islam embracing all interpretations and protecting all its adherents, without extremism or sectarianism, and a peace to occupy the hearts of all who live on Kuwaiti territory, indeed, for everyone to take part in making that happen.

He emphasized the Kuwaiti state's commitment to the necessity of repairing the damage experienced by its citizens due to the Iraqi invasion, according to bases and regulations applied to all, whose implementation would be supervised by an agency of acknowledged honesty and capability and by the Bureau of Accounting, which would submit a periodic report to the coming National Assembly, and for this Assembly to legislate lawfully and deter some weak-spirited people.

He said that it was up to the Kuwaitis to prove that "democracy was a tree that could grow in the sands of the desert" if we all—rulers and ruled—watched over it with care and patience.

He indicated that all must believe that Kuwaiti democracy had come back for good and refute what some people and rumors said—that the coming elections are a tactical action by which the government intends to keep the promises it pledged during the period of occupation, both in the popular conference at Jeddah and in its contacts with the countries of the alliance that took part in the liberation battle. The rumors centered on precedents such as when the National Assembly was dissolved and the government attempted to amend the Constitution.

He reaffirmed the need to establish the principle that democracy was a strategic option and not a political maneuver that ended when its goal was denied.

He added, "The pursuit of democracy in Kuwait after the 'Mother of Crimes' requires that the three constitutional authorities take up their duties confidently and without hesitation, in cooperation and without scorn. Democracy—after the ordeal—has two wings, rulers who know the limits of their rights towards the citizens and not to go beyond them, and citizens who understand their duties towards their country and their rulers and not to go beyond those, either. This is a difficult balance, in which the rulers commit to the limits of their powers, and the nation is bound by certain duties. This is what the people and the government want."

Al-Jaw'an praised the role of democracy in the countries of the civilized world, "who came to our aid and liberated Kuwait through the parliamentary councils of those countries." He explained that only five votes in Congress had passed the resolution for Operation Desert Storm. He pointed out the need to return the favor to them "and thus prove to them that democracy has returned to Kuwait and will remain."

Al-Jaw'an demanded that Kuwait crown its importance by establishing the rule of law and its sovereignty by separating the judiciary from the executive authority, so that a judge would have no authority above him but the authority of the law, unlike the situation now, with the judiciary reporting to the Minister of Justice.

Fourth District candidate 'Ali al-Baghili refused to get into the issue of subsidiary elections, which the fourth district is involved in, and the divisions they have caused in the body of the nation. He said they were sectarian struggles that could put an end to national unity.

Al-Baghili said that the dividing up of districts had taken place under the law and the present reality of the country, and that "if I want to change this law I must know the conditions we are living in and the future geographical structure." He added, "How can we cite some articles of the Constitution at a time when we pay no attention to it when it conflicts with our interests?"

He described the subsidiary elections as "the demolition elections" because they will demolish the nation's existence. "I consider the people of Kuwait to be a civilized people that understands the circumstances around them, and the dangers working to undo its existence and divide its people." He called to account all those trying to split Kuwaiti ranks, and accused the government of supporting some candidates to win their support in the next Assembly. He said that "the misuse of democracy can turn it into "a punishment instead of a blessing."

Al-Baghili added that the current policy was following an errant path that would threaten the economic and political situation in the future and called for a policy aimed at finding peaceful ways to maintain friendship and good neighborliness with neighboring countries.

He said that the upcoming elections would be watched by the world and confirmed his rejection of the principle of mandate, the choosing of the candidate by some individuals who are influential with the people. He said that the spirit of harmony had to prevail among citizens of all sects and classes.

Talal al-'Ayyar Speaks on Security Pacts

92AE0675B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Sep 92 p 3

[Article: "Independent Candidate Talal al-'Ayyar to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: 'Security Pacts Deter Those Whose Language Is Force, Opening the 2 August File Is for Reform Not Blame'"]

[Text] Former National Assembly member Talal al-'Ayyar, an independent candidate for the National Assembly, announced that the security pacts that Kuwait has signed with the powerful countries are in harmony with the pulse of the Kuwaiti people, who still feel gratitude to those countries after their participation in the war to liberate Kuwait and restore rights to those entitled to them. He expressed the hope that these pacts would deter the Iraqi regime, which only understands the language of force.

In an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, al-'Ayyar said: "We are a small country. Our defense capability is limited. We do not object to the establishment of military bases for coalition forces on our territory if it strengthens the stability and security of Kuwait and raises its defense capability."

About the demand by some candidates to "open the file" on [the events of] 2 August, al-'Ayyar said: "What happened on that day was an unforgettable disaster. If opening the file is for the purpose of reform, evaluation, and learning lessons, there is no harm to it. But if the purpose is to cast blame, target individuals, and settle scores, it should be rejected and cannot be haggled over, because the first and last object is Kuwait. What happened is a lesson to everyone, and we must learn a lesson from it, provided that it is a stimulus for us to strengthen the spirit of being one family and strengthen our trust in our wise leadership and legitimate government."

On the emergence of a strong trend among Kuwaiti young people to reject Arab identity, al-'Ayyar said: "We cannot contribute to support for this trend. We cannot cast off our Arabness and Islamic religion, whatever happened or whatever might happen in the future. Although some Arab regimes unfortunately took a stand against truth and for falsehood, we cannot wrong ourselves by disowning our Arabness and our Islam." He added: "Certainly the Western position was decisive and bold, and it played the major role in liberating Kuwait. Yet we cannot ignore the role of the Arab countries that took an honorable stand, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria, which used their own territory and sent their sons to participate in liberating Kuwait. The emergence of this trend is a result of the disappointment the Kuwaiti people felt at the positions of certain Arab countries, but the phenomenon will come to an end in the near future. There is no doubt that the new National Assembly will contribute effectively to increasing Kuwaiti youths' consciousness of their Arab-Islamic identity. However, we do not expect the fervor of our support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause to return to its past level because of the suffering that the bitter experience of the past has left behind. Neither do we expect our position to change in the next few years. However, as a people who have suffered wrong, we do not want wrong to befall another people."

Regarding his election platform, al-'Ayyar said he would strive "to apply Islamic law in various fields, seek the passage of laws that strengthen this direction, and seek the passage of a law to unify Kuwaiti citizenship because the members of the Kuwaiti people showed great loyalty during the crisis, regardless of their degree of citizenship. We must work to fill all of the breaches that enemies use to cast doubt on the justice of Kuwaiti society. In addition, Kuwaitis themselves are troubled by their division into classes and degrees."

He added that if elected to the National Assembly, he would strive to solve the problem of the "biduns"—stateless individuals. This does not mean that every "bidun" would obtain Kuwaiti citizenship, which should be given to those who deserve it. Since the 1960's, Kuwait has undergone a large migration from neighboring countries. Some of the migrants had hidden their passports and had claimed to be "biduns," while others were indeed groups of Kuwaiti bedouins still without citizenship. There were soldiers who sacrificed their lives for Kuwait whose children are still without citizenship. Likewise, the soldiers who participated in liberating Kuwait considered themselves citizens, although they were "biduns."

He said he would strive to "form powerful special committees to decide these matters, particularly since the granting of Kuwaiti citizenship is a matter with a high level of importance."

Al-'Ayyar supported the general criticisms of the Kuwaiti economy, saying that "there is a kind of inadequacy and lack of planning in dealing with economic questions, particularly given the fact that Iraq targeted our economic capacities in its brutal invasion."

He made it clear that he would call for "opening the door of investment in Kuwait to foreign capital, developing customs facilities, creating a free zone, offering facilities in Kuwaiti airports and harbors to strengthen foreign trade, supporting the government's orientation toward privatizing public-sector companies, and learning from the experiences of neighboring countries, like Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, in offering banking facilities and financial services to foreign clients in order to transform Kuwait into a financial center."

In the foreign policy area, al-'Ayyar said he supported "the government's orientation toward strengthening Kuwait's relations with the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries. I think this is the fundamental alignment toward which Kuwaiti foreign policy is moving, in addition to the Arab-Islamic alignment. In particular, cooperation with the countries that supported Kuwait during the ordeal of occupation, such as Egypt, Syria, and Turkey, should be strengthened."

He said: "Kuwait's international relations, especially its relations with the powerful countries, have demonstrated Kuwait's success and effectiveness in making friends who are able to offer assistance in time of need. The next parliament should strengthen and develop these relations by all possible means, especially with the United States, Britain, and France."

[Box, p 3]

Election Phenomenon

Like any legislative elections, the election campaign in Kuwait is witnessing some noteworthy surprises, even if the climate in which the campaign is taking place and the kinds of proposals the candidates are making to deal with the various issues and affairs of Kuwait are not a surprise.

The candidates are benefiting from the climate of press freedom, following the lifting of newspaper censorship some time ago. But the newspapers were not expected to receive pictures of candidates wearing black turbans announcing that they would enter the campaign for this October's elections.

Election conversations in various circles these days concentrate on the advertisement for Sayyid Husayn al-Qallaf, a candidate for the eighth district (Bayan, Mushrif, Hawalli, and Maydan Hawalli). Like the advertisements of other candidates, which have proliferated in recent days, his was on the front pages of the newspapers. But there was one difference: He was wearing a black turban. Candidate al-Qalaf opened his election headquarters yesterday with a lecture entitled "Religion's View of Politics."

Renowned Friday Prayer Imam Supports al-Shatti

92AE0678F London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
17 Sep 92 p 5

[Article by Hamad al-Jasir: "Campaigns Heating up on Eve of Kuwaiti Election; Political Proposals, Demands, and Banquets"]

[Text] The ceremony marking the opening of the election office of Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti, candidate of the Kuwaiti Islamic Constitutional Movement, last Sunday has started a model that has been emulated on similar occasions, of which Kuwait has seen dozens in the past two weeks.

Hundreds of supporters of al-Shatti and of the movement he represents in the Mushrif area came to the office, which is tantamount to a long (tent) before which wooden chairs are lined up the way they are lined up in front of coffee shops. Between the tent and the chairs, a large area was covered by plush rugs on which most of the audience, more than 2,000 people, sat when the candidate took the microphone and inaugurated the election evening.

Shaykh Ahmad al-Qattan, a very well-known Friday preacher, delivered a fiery speech praising al-Shatti and urging that the best candidates be elected as members of the National Assembly. He also talked of the hopes the Kuwaitis attach to restored democracy.

Shaykh Jasim Muhalhal al-Yasin, the Constitutional Movement secretary general and a prominent Islamic figure in Kuwait, delivered an address that included the movement's political speech and election platform, in which the most significant point is the call for "Islamizing the Constitution by amending Article 2 to ensure application of the Islamic Shari'ah, achieving security with Islam, devoting attention to the issue of morals, fighting imported values, and safeguarding public money." He also urged the authorities not to interfere in the elections.

Al-Shatti focused on the tasks of the new parliament, expressing the opinion that it is the "most serious and important since the country's independence in 1961." He also urged the political elites to make accomplishments under the parliament's dome, "not rush toward conflict and acts of oneupmanship." He also expressed the view that forming a cabinet emanating from the parliament constitutes the "cornerstone in political reform. We want a large degree of participation by the National Assembly members in the government." Al-Shatti also demanded that the deputy prime minister in the next cabinet be an assembly member. In Kuwait, this post has always been tied to the foreign minister.

Al-Shatti has made the idea of "development" a focal point in his election presentations and urged that Kuwait emulate countries like Singapore and Taiwan as a model. He concluded his address with what has become customary in election rallies, inviting the audience (nearly 2,500 people) to dinner.

What was witnessed by the election evening organized for candidate al-Shatti applies to most ceremonies marking the launching of the election process in this exciting and eventful season that Kuwait is going through while it awaits the 5 October 1992 legislative elections.

While the Islamic Constitutional Movement (formerly Muslim Brotherhood) was celebrating its candidate, the Constitutional Grouping (a merchant group) was celebrating Jasim al-Saqr, its sole candidate, in another electoral district, al-Shamiyah, and with nearly the same manifestations, although the ideas and the presentations were different. The day before, the Democratic Forum, which includes former pan-Arabists and leftists, celebrated their candidate, namely Dr. Ahmad al-Khatib who has criticized the government in his election campaign.

On the same evening, Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i, who has developed disagreement with his friends in the Democratic Forum, launched his campaign against al-Shatti, his rival in Mushrif District. But in making his reform proposals, he has opted for a tone that is less vehement and more pragmatic than al-Khatib's.

Candidates of the seven opposition forces have attracted large crowds of voters. In their presentations, their rhetoric has focused on criticizing the government, for which the Iraqi occupation crisis and the decisions concerning public money provide rich material. They have demanded political reforms, administrative development, and improved accountability and they raise other issues, such as security and the country's demographic makeup.

But political and intellectual interaction is not a rule in election rallies, even though it has become "fashionable" among Kuwaiti candidates to deliver addresses criticizing the government and to host speakers who have a popular presence. But the rallies of numerous candidates, especially in the outer areas, are closer to banquets than to political rallies.

Election Industry

The customs connected with the election season have helped a large number of services in Kuwait to prosper. The candidates' election offices in the 25 districts have needed all the tents, chairs, rugs, water tanks, and drink-mixing kitchen utensils that the Kuwaiti market can offer.

The market for electrical equipment, such as microphones, loudspeakers, video cameras—used to record election rallies and then distribute them to homes as part of the candidates' propaganda—has prospered.

All of a sudden, calligraphers find abundant work because tens of thousands of wooden posters of various sizes and colors are spread these days all over Kuwait's streets. Contrary to what is customary in other countries, few candidates wish to show their pictures in the streets. But the slogans accompanying a candidate's name reflect his political and intellectual affiliation. Printing presses, advertising agencies, and information services have flourished. Tons of election invitations were distributed in recent days. Moroever, the local press has reaped abundant profits from advertisements for the candidates.

But the economic sector that has experienced the greatest prosperity is the restaurants sector. Shafiq Ibrahim, (a Lebanese) who caters banquets for one of Kuwait's famous restaurants, said: "This is the season for which we have been preparing for months. Now, we cater six banquets a night, each for 1,200 guests and each costing the candidate no less than 3,500 dinars (nearly $12,000)."

Neutral Media

What is interesting in the current election is the new tendency of the government media to take a more positive stance toward the election. After numerous opposition figures had criticized the Ministry of Information, Dr. Jasim al-Ya'qub took urgent steps to increase television and radio coverage of the election campaigns, and the official media have allowed such a broad margin of freedom for criticism to be made through them that they have surprised the opposition itself. Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i was interviewed by the Kuwaiti Radio, and he addressed relatively harsh criticism to the government.

It seems that Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwait's prime minister and crown prince, is convinced that the new election experiment must be given the greatest chances to succeed at the information level and that it should be kept clear of the suspicions of government influence, especially because it is being conducted under the searchlights of international interest and because hundreds of foreign journalists have arrived in Kuwait as the election date approaches.

Whereas the Kuwaiti opposition insists that there is government interference, the government says the people are ultimately the umpire and, through the polling boxes, they will decide what is right in an honest election that rises above suspicion.

Al-Qalaf Rejects Separation of Politics, Religion

92AE0678G London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Nasir al-Mutayri: "'Confused Ideas' Motivated al-Qalaf to Run for Election; Sacrifices by All Kuwaitis Have Confirmed People's Unity Against Occupation"]

[Text] Kuwait—Husayn al-Qalaf, the eighth district candidate, has defended the reasons and motives that prompted him to run for election to the National Assembly. In an address he delivered two days ago at the opening of his election office, al-Qalaf asserted that this is his course now that the nation's ideas have become confused.

Al-Qalaf denounced the idea ingrained in some people's mind that religion and politics are separate. He declared that he has worn a black turban to prove to people that the Shari'ah rules explain everything and that his running for election to the National Assembly confirms that there is no separation between religion and politics. He said such separation reflects an interest-oriented viewpoint that motivates one to do everything that accomplishes personal interest, even if it leads to the proliferation of oppression, occupation, and disgrace. He added that this is the door through which Saddam invaded Kuwait.

Al-Qalaf lauded the role performed by the Kuwaiti people, who have "inscribed the greatest epics in confronting the evil occupier." He said that the most evident proof of this people's unity is that the [spilled] blood of all Kuwaitis has mixed. He also expressed his sympathy for the families of prisoners detained in Iraq's jails who wait to return to the homeland.

Al-Qalaf added: "With this attire and from this position, I urge that we inscribe a great epic in this small country

and that we emerge to tell the Islamic world loudly that we have united in this country to denyt those who wish to fish in troubled water and provoke sectarian issues the opportunity to do so and to pull the rug from under their feet."

Constitutional Movement Announces Candidate Names

92AE0678H London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by 'Abd Husayn 'Abd-al-Rahman: "Islamic Constitutional Movement Encircles Speculation and Announces Candidates on Monday"]

[Text] Kuwait—'Isa Majid al-Shahin, the Islamic Constitutional Movement official spokesman, has announced that the movement, which represents the Muslim Brotherhood, plans to reveal its candidates Monday for the coming election and the names of the candidates that it will support.

Al-Shahin said that the movement will hold a press conference at the election office of Dr. Isma'il [al-Shatti], its most prominent candidate, in the Sharaf [presumably meaning Mushrif] area to disclose these names.

The Islamic Constitutional Movement's announcement puts an end to the speculation that the movement supports this or that candidate in order to gain more votes now that it has already nominated its candidates, such as Ahmad 'Abd-al-Muhsin in the first district, Jarallah Hasan Jarallah in the second district, and Ahmad Muhammad al-Nassar in the third district.

As for the fourth district, the movement will disclose the name of the candidates it supports there. It is likely that they will be Jasim al-Musannif and 'Abdallah al-Rumi. The movement has no candidate in the fifth electoral district, but it has Humud al-Rumi in the sixth district and 'Adil al-Subayh in the seventh. The name of Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti figures prominently in the eighth district, that of Dr. Nasir Jasim al-Sani' in the ninth district, of Mubarak al-Duwaylah in the 16th electoral district (al-'Umariyah), and of 'Abdallah al-'Arradah in the 18th district.

In al-Jahrah, the movement is represented by Engineer Muhammad al-Busayri and in the 24th electoral district by Dr. 'Abdallah Rashid al-Hajiri.

It is expected that there will be some surprises in the names of those who will be announced as representatives of the brotherhood and of those who will be supported by the movement.

Sectarian Politics Criticized

92AE0678I London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Jasim al-Shammari: "Objections to Subsidiary Elections in al-Shamiyah and al-Shuwaykh; Decisive Rejection of 'Suspect' Sectarian Endeavors; Candidates Represent All People's Factions"]

[Text] Kuwait—The accelerating daily developments in the election arena and the increasingly vehement presentations have generated diverse tendencies on a number of issues that earlier had not figured in the arena.

Last week, the issue of subsidiary election in the fourth district generated reaction, and a number of the most prominent newspaper columnists proceeded to debate it and to deal with a rumor to the effect that a "Sunna" election was held in the district, thus motivating several political tendencies to warn against a sectarian sedition that could sweep away the Kuwaiti people's unity.

The political forces issued a statement urging the sincere to confront what they termed "suspect and detrimental" activities. Candidate 'Abdallah al-Rumi denied any connection with the call [for a subsidiary election]. In this district, there are 17 candidates, of whom the most prominent are 'Abdallah al-Rumi, Husam al-Rumi, Attorney Mubarak al-Mutawwa', Attorney 'Ali al-Baghli, and Saqr al-Sudan.

The latest development in this regard was the rally organized by Dr. Salih al-Yasin, a candidate in the 13th district, at the opening of his election office. Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i, Attorney 'Ali al-Baghli, Dr. 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Muda'ij, Dr. 'Abd-al-Malik al-Tamimi, and Attorney 'Imad al-Sayf participated in this rally that raised the slogan of "no to sectarianism." Dr. Salih al-Yasin has adopted this slogan as his election campaign slogan because he is the "candidate of all factions and sects of the Kuwaiti people." Meanwhile, Dr. Salih al-Yasin has characterized sectarianism as a "malady that is dangerous to the Kuwaiti society, especially because of its small population. It is a pretext to crush a man's dignity and devour his rights and his source of livelihood."

Dr. 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Muda'ij, a candidate in the 12th district, said: "Sectarianism did not exist in the Kuwaiti society and is something that has been introduced recently. Its continuation will be a catastrophe to the future generations." He asserted that the growth of sectarianism will mean the "fragmentation and end of this society," noting what has happened to Lebanon and Afghanistan.

But the words of Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i took another direction. He stressed that the "absence of the government and the monopoly of wealth and power by the minority are an important element in the proliferation of sectarianism. Inequality in the application of law and rights and the unavailability of full services entrench the phenomenon of sectarianism." He expressed his regret

because "some National Assembly members attain their membership only by way of sectarianism. Then, their sole concern in the assembly becomes the protection of sectarian rights."

Dr. 'Abd-al-Malik al-Tamimi, head of the history department of Kuwait University, spoke of the significance of sectarianism and characterized it as a "cancerous disease that must be eliminated from the outset." Attorney 'Ali al-Baghli, a candidate in the fourth district, spoke from personal experience, saying that he was surprised to hear some people say that they want to hold a "subsidiary election in the district on a purely sectarian basis." He said that he was stunned, especially since he has seen the honest competition in the district, which is convinced that sectarianism is obsolete.

Attorney 'Imad al-Sayf criticized the government, saying that "sectarianism is an abnormal phenomenon whose proliferation is helped by the vote-buying process, which is supported by the government." He noted that a successful solution for the elimination of sectarianism lies in the full application of democracy.

Electorate Thought To Vote Based on Tribal Ties

92AE0684B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Sep p 2

[Article by Jasim al-Shimri]

[Text] Before going into the candidates' election programs, it is worth mentioning that most of the issues raised on the Kuwaiti scene have already been brought up before in one form or another. They are old issues on the electoral scene in Kuwait. A number of observers say that the real problem is making a decision, while others say, "We make more laws than anyone else on Earth and implement them least."

There are dozens of committees in Kuwait that are charged with finding solutions to issues that merit study, but—according to the candidates—these committees do nothing but get paid, after finding that their recommendations get no farther than office shelves, and never get beyond the discussion stage.

Here the cards are oddly shuffled, making it difficult for the observer to examine candidly the vision and thoughts of the candidates. They all harp on the Constitution, law, and democracy and call for solutions to the attendant problems. It is remarkable that the same proposals are promoted equally by the opposition and government movements, differing only in the vehemence of the proposal and criticism.

Many observers think Kuwaiti voters will not vote for candidates based on the candidates' positions, thoughts, or ideas, despite the number of debates held during the election campaign. This is due to several factors, governed by family and sectarian ties and social relations, while others relate it to the level of services the [parliamentary] deputy has provded a certain citizen or one of the membwers of his family. This is certainly so in no small number of cases.

Journalist Muhammad Musa'id Salih has said in his daily column in AL-QABAS newspaper, "The candidates do not think that it [the election] will take place by setting up tents, by giving delicious banquets and intellectual dialogues, or by putting up posters and names in the streets. That may be important, but what actually happens is that each voter votes for a family member, as he defines that—he makes up his mind on the basis of social relations."

For these reasons, observers note that some people move along parallel tracks: first, dropping in on local diwaniyat [unofficial popular gatherings] and increasing the number of family visits and courtesy calls, and second, doing all he can for the voters, using whatever pull he has with officials.

Thus reaping a large number of votes occurs in these two ways. It does not prevent factions' processions, the call for election debates, or one of the speakers' being invited to [raise] a certain issue. In this context, as well, one may not ignore the role of material things in getting more of the votes needed to put a candidate in the Assembly.

There are growing complaints about this phenomenon in circles committed to thought and ideology. There has been emphatic mention of it in the press and requests for the government to combat it, considering it a crime punishable under the law. Some say that the price of a vote has reached 4,000 Kuwaiti dinars.

Star Debaters

It must be pointed out that star debaters, for whom there is competition to host, have emerged. Kuwaiti economist Jasim al-Sa'dun is the most prominent of these speakers, in addition to candidate Dr. Ahmad al-Rab', former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sa'ud al-'Asimi, former National Assembly Speaker Ahmad al-Sa'dun, and lawyer 'Imad al-Sayf.

The debates—which got underway early, about eight months ago—have centered on several old issues, chiefly the population structure, foreign investments, security, administrative reform, the role of the National Assembly, and democracy.

Security fears remain a dreaded inclination in most or all of the presentation in this period, and the candidates who have dealt with this subject have evinced their support for the security agreements Kuwait has signed with friendly countries and have demanded the conclusion of more agreements. The candidates have been sure to bring up the role of the Gulf Cooperation Council in establishing the concept of security abroad. Many view it as "representing a strategic dimension for Kuwait in confronting foreign developments."

Kuwait has occupied itself before with the issue of foreign investments, which has made this a substantial topic in the candidates diwaniyat and offices. One of the most prominent commentators is Jassim al-Sa'dun. Proposals on the subject run along parallel lines, dealing with expressing fear of the future, the dangers that threaten the reserves for coming generations, the need for officials to be capable and honest, the need to enforce the law on those who deal fraudulently with public funds, and lastly, the coming Assembly's familiarity with all of the financial operations of the Investment Bureau and continuing to monitor and supervise it.

Observers note that the government has been put in a tight corner. Criticisms and attacks have grown sharper with the approach of election day.

On the other hand, everyone is bringing up the concept of national unity without going into detail or discussing the means of applying it. Observers following the content of the proposals note that the concept is brought up solely to affirm the lack of a sectarian split, without getting into the details of the situation of naturalized citizens, including the Democratic Forum's statement that confirmed the necessity of granting voting rights to the children of naturalized citizens on the basis that they are first-class Kuwaitis and of reducing the waiting period for those who have been naturalized.

The details of the population structure conceal foggy concepts, whose broad ideas come forth—that Kuwaitis should be the majority, that employment and hiring preference should be given to them, that certain jobs should be restricted to them only. As for administrative reform, some link it to the issue of reform of the overall structure of government. Some have said that the creation of a grievance board is a frank admission on the part of the government of the issue of administrative corruption.

The most prominent person to address this topic is the head of the Society of Lawyers and sixth district candidate Mishari al-'Asimi, who has demanded a law to prosecute ministers and strengthen the punishment for the errors and crimes of government leaders, so that they will be left no chance to "flee Kuwaiti [justice]," by which he meant the phenomenon of "early retirement."

The Kuwaiti elections are considered an opportunity for some to set out their ideas and for others to get their worries off their chests. It is a chance for the rest to help change the pattern of their lives and their routine. If the Kuwaiti elections are a hope to build a radiant future, they are proceeding in circumstances that are, to say the least, dark.

Candidate al-Tukhaym Calls for Review of Laws

92AE0684A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Sep 92 p 2

[Article: "Al-Tukhaym Calls for Equality Among Citizens" by Khalid al-'Abbad in Kuwait]

[Text] Eighth district candidate Ahmad al-Tuwaykh has said that national unity "must be safeguarded by any and all means, and the blessing of democracy must be safeguarded in light of the Constitution, which guarantees citizens' rights. This was confirmed in the conditions that prevailed during the occupation." He also rejected any measure of separatism among the citizens of Kuwait and called on them to repudiate sectarianism in all its forms.

Al-Tukhaym added that scores must not be settled at the expense of the nation and the people. He confirmed the necessity of honorable competition to obtain parliamentary seats and to defend the rights of the citizens, as well as the fact that one wrong cannot be used to right another. He demanded criticism on the part of honest writers and the press to be a beacon warning the people against error and not an arena for their own views, which benefits the enemies of Kuwait as a weapon against people who suffered much to win their freedom, many of whose sons gave their lives defending it. He also added that "we must review the laws and issues that need to be dealt with. We must achieve our political, economic, and social aspirations in a sound democratic context." Additionally, there must be a specific model in terms of the parliament and the next Assembly, through intensive action. He explained that those who shirked their appointed responsibilities should be called to account.

He reaffirmed the need to develop the administration by seeking the aid of Kuwaiti experts, giving young Kuwaitis the opportunity to rise towards self-realization and to use their abilities to achieve social equality and look closely at enduring causes and solve them at the roots. Without giving a greater chance in the long run to complete the solution of the issues and by working to raise the citizens' standard of living, benefiting from the expertise and abilities to combat runaway high prices in Kuwait, the candidates seeks a parliamentary seat.

Laws Passed Called Illegal

92AE0683E London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Sep 92 p 2

[Text] Kuwait—Sa'ud al-Samakah, candidate in the seventh district, said the National Assembly is supposed to be formed on the basis of the 1962 constitution, which is a written political document that was endorsed by the ruler and the ruled. No change, suspension, or amendment can be effected without the approval of both sides. He said the political alienation and disruption that Kuwait experienced [during the Gulf war] was really a coup d'etat. Therefore, the laws that were enacted during that period are illegal because they were issued during the absence of the people's representatives.

He stressed that Jiddah conference [held by Kuwaiti deputies and the government in exile] was a return to legality and the right path "because until 2 August there was no legality. We hope that the democratic process will continue uninterrupted because we believe that prosperity and the Kuwaiti people's ambitions can be

achieved only by continuing with consultation and democracy, because it is the sound and firm basis on which the society can realize all its ambitions."

Speaking about the Assembly's role as a means of developing democratic thought, al-Samakah said: "We cannot reap the fruits of democracy within a specified period of time, say four or 10 years. Nor can we fix a specific period of time for it and then wonder why democracy did not achieve for us what we wanted. Democracy is a practice. The more we practice it, the more its traditions become entrenched and the more awareness is spread. Therefore, we will reap its fruits in the long term." Regarding the most important issues that will be put to the coming National Assembly, he said: "There is no doubt that the political vacuum that existed from 1986 to this day has been marked by excessive infringements involving fateful issues, such as security issues. There is a sense of a security vacuum; there is also the question of the population structure, and there is the question of education."

Al-Samakah stressed the need to lay down a specific policy for the development of Kuwaiti citizens. This calls for providing raw materials and tools. All that we have heard so far about Kuwaiti citizens has merely been slogans. This is a very important issue, but it must be realized and understood that the coming Assembly does not have a magic wand and cannot eliminate corruption that has accumulated since 1986 overnight. It would suffice if the coming Assembly—whatever its shape is—would entrench the political values contained in the Constitution and try to spread the tradition of democratic practice. We also hope that it will achieve some of our ambitions."

Al-Darwish Condemns Negative Politics

92AE0678A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Sep 92 p 3

[Interview With Faysal al-Darwish, former secretary of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, by Nasir al-Mutayri; place and date not given: "National Assembly ex-Secretary to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Political Blocs Are Reflection of Popular Reform-Oriented Perspective; Government Hopes Some Candidates Will Win But It Does Not Back Them"]

[Text] Kuwait—Faysal al-Darwish, former secretary of the Kuwaiti National Assembly in 1985 (current candidate for 17th District), has asserted that the emergence of political organizations in Kuwait is a normal thing, noting that they are essential for every democratic system because "without political organizations or parties, democracy remains paralyzed." He also pointed out that the political blocs existing in the Kuwaiti electoral arena currently are the reflection of political aspirations that meet on a reform-oriented perspective.

In an exclusive interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, al-Darwish condemned the negative actions that distort the image of democracy in Kuwait, the most significant of which is vote buying. He has warned that the proliferation of this phenomenon will lead to forging the people's will.

Al-Darwish touched on the priorities that must be placed on the next National Assembly agenda, demanding that the Assembly adopt the security issue and give it the attention it merits because it constitutes a concern for every citizen and resident of Kuwait. Following is the text of the interview:

[Mutayri] In 1985, you held the position of secretary of the National Assembly that was dissolved in accordance with an amir's decree in 1986. Do you believe that the Assembly failed to cooperate with the executive authority, and who do you blame for its dissolution?

[Darwish] The first session of the 1985 Assembly did not fail. But some sort of misunderstanding dominated cooperation between the executive and legislative branches. However, the 1985 Assembly made extensive accomplishments.

[Mutayri] Some people allege that the absence of a legislative authority in Kuwait was a basic factor in the Iraqi forces' invasion of Kuwait. What is your comment on this?

[Darwish] The absence of a parliament in that period was a reason, not a factor. There is no doubt that the absence of a legislative authority in Kuwait since the Assembly was dissolved in 1985 helped Iraq embark on implementing its premeditated plans. It is well known that Iraq has expansionist plans that go beyond Kuwait.

Major Challenges

[Mutayri] What is your opinion of the the National Council that was established in place of the National Assembly, and why didn't you participate in it?

[Darwish] The National Council is a consultative body whose help the government enlisted after the disappearance of the National Assembly. I do not believe that the council is an alternative to the National Assembly.

[Mutayri] What are your visions for the coming phase under the umbrella of a parliamentary life in Kuwait? What are the priorities that you believe should be included in the National Assembly agenda?

[Darwish] The coming National Assembly faces major challenges. I believe that if the authorities cooperate in a state of separation of powers, the result will be positive for the country and the people. The Assembly is the watchdog, and it will lift heavy responsibilities and enormous duties from the government's shoulders. As for priorities that must be included in the coming National Assembly agenda, they are topped by the security issue because security has become a concern preoccupying the minds of both citizens and residents. The GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] procession must also be enhanced so that the GCC can become more effective than it has been.

Subsidiary Elections

[Mutayri] Some phenomena have recently surfaced in the electoral arena strongly, most prominently the subsidiary election phenomenon, which, some people believe, distorts the image of democracy. What is your position on these elections?

[Darwish] If a Kuwaiti clan meets and solves its problem, whether through a subsidiary election or through an accord, I would not consider this a faulty result. But if subsidiary elections are adopted as a rule, then they will certainly fragment national unity and the choice will be unsuccessful. This is what we should avoid.

[Mutayri] What is your opinion of the vote-buying phenomenon?

[Darwish] This is impermissible legally and it is rejected by Arab ethics. If it permeates, it will have a detrimental outcome for Kuwait.

Political Parties

[Mutayri] Political blocs representing various parties have surfaced in the electoral arena. Don't you see this as the prelude for the emergence of political parties in Kuwait in the near future?

[Darwish] Political blocs in the National Assembly are inevitable. They are tantamount to political aspirations that meet on a reform-oriented perspective. As long as we want democracy, then we must accept the presence of parties. There is no complete democracy without parties. Democracy will remain paralyzed if there are no political organizations.

Revising Constitution

[Mutayri] Viewpoints on revising the Constitution range from support to opposition. What is your viewpoint on this issue, if it were to be raised in the next Assembly?

[Darwish] I agree in principle on revising the Constitution, provided that the revision is for greater liberties and that it will bring about Islamic development. But if the revision undermines the principle of separation of the powers and the concept of legislation, then it is rejected altogether. The government had submitted a proposal to revise the Constitution, but that proposal was likely to undermine the Constitution, and I opposed it.

Government Backing for Some Candidates

[Mutayri] There is an ongoing debate in certain circles about the government backing for certain candidates. What is your comment?

[Darwish] The government may feel pleased with a certain individual, and it may hope that he will get elected to the Assembly. This is normal. But to date, I have not felt that some candidates are backed, and I believe that the government is neutral. The next National Assembly has to settle the issue of naturalized Kuwaiti citizens and abolish the distinction existing in the citizenship law so that national unity will be preserved. The issue of the stateless [al-bidun] or those who have no specific citizenship must be settled. Aren't these people, some of whom are now stationed to guard Kuwait's northern border, entitled to Kuwaiti citizenship?

Statement Issued by Former National Assembly Members

92AE0683C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Sep 92 p 3

[Text] Ahmad 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sa'dun, Kuwaiti National Assembly speaker in 1985, denounced the phenomenon of buying electoral votes, which recently evolved from being an individualistic behavior into a public and organized affair. He believes it is not unlikely that the government has a hand in this harmful phenomenon and supports it. It does so in order to enable some deputies, with whom the government wishes to fill the parliamentary seats, to win the elections in order to weaken the Assembly and to eventually seek to amend the Kuwaiti Constitution.

This pronouncement took place at the seminar that Salih al-Fadalah, 10th district candidate and former deputy National Assembly speaker, had to mark the opening of his election headquarters. Ahmad al-Sa'dun, Hammud al-Rumi, and Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i attended the event.

At the opening of the seminar, Salih al-Fadalah read the electoral manifesto issued by the deputies of the 1985 National Assembly. The manifesto said the Kuwaitis will go to the ballot boxes to elect a new National Assembly after more than six years, which were lean years during which the people suffered tremendously and paid a high price on all economic, political, and social levels.

The manifesto lauds the Kuwaiti people's heroic stand, which was the key to the downfall of the occupiers.

The deputies of the 1985 Assembly said they look toward the future "with great confidence in our people's ability to protect their institutions and the ability of the coming National Assembly to develop the tools needed to function and to help democratic action to succeed." They said this depends on the manner in which the government deals with the question of democracy and the degree it believes in it.

So that the democratic process will not suffer any setback, the manifesto listed the principal issues on which action should concentrate during the coming stage. It summarizes them as follows:

- First: Honoring the martyrs, naming streets and squares after them and establishing a public institution that would look after the affairs of the martyrs' families.

- Second: Dealing with the question of national security from a strategic standpoint that would take into consideration the regional and international developments and their effect on the safety and security of Kuwait. Reevaluating the military establishment and the nature of its administration and arming and placing it under the parliament's control. The situation also calls for reviewing military conscription and changing it into a developed military system.
- Third: Reaffirming respect for public funds. Such funds have been squandered in many different ways, from which influential forces have benefited at the expense of the rest of the society. This calls for strengthening the role of the accounting department and maintaining strict control on foreign investments.
- Fourth: Realizing the full independence of the Kuwaiti judiciary from the executive authority in accordance with the principle of separation between the authorities.
- Fifth: Constant assertion of national unity.
- Sixth: A radical review of the question of administration and regarding administrative reform as one of the priorities in the coming stage.
- Seventh: A radical solution for the problem of the "bidun" [stateless] people. Assembly deputies in 1985 warned of the serious effect this odd and strange phenomenon could have on modern societies.
- Eighth: Thoroughly reviewing higher education by linking education to society's problems.
- Ninth: Underlining the danger of the slow work in the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], and giving momentum to joint action on the basis of a new and definite program.
- 10th: A radical review of the demographic policy in order to adjust the imbalance of the ratio of Kuwaiti citizens to other nationalities.
- 11th: Paying attention to the media. Radio and television should be considered as public institutions financed by public funds. Article 25 of the publications law should be canceled, and all unconstitutional laws that restrict freedom of publication and expression should be canceled.

Candidate Hammud al-Rumi, as a member of the legislative committee of the previous Assembly, discussed the question of amending Article 2 of the Constitution, which provides that "the religion of the state is Islam and the Islamic Shari'ah is the principal source of legislation."

Al-Rumi said the current laws now in force in Kuwait cannot be amended in order to give them an Islamic character, except by amending Article 2 of the Constitution. He said that such a bill was submitted to the government during the previous Assembly, but, up to the moment the Assembly was dissolved, the government made no positive or negative response.

He reaffirmed the need to continue to maintain the implementation of the Islamic Shari'ah in Kuwait.

Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i, former National Assembly deputy and candidate in the eighth district, discussed the question of a radical review of higher education, which is called for in the eighth article of the electoral manifesto. He said: "There can be no political, social, or economic reform in Kuwait without reforming the higher education system." He stressed the need to link education to the problems of society.

Threats Against Candidate al-Khatib Denied

92AE0683A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Sep 92 p 3

[Text] Kuwait—Shaykh Fahd Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah [son of the Kuwaiti crown prince] affirmed that allegations made by Dr. Ahmad al-Khatib regarding statements attributed to Shaykh Fahd al-Sa'd during the opening of al-Khatib electoral headquarters last Saturday night were false. Al-Khatib alleged that Fahd Sa'd al-Abdallah called at his house and the house of his brother, 'Iqab al-Khatib, after the liberation of the country and threatened to harm them. Shaykh Fahd al-Sa'd said he is prepared to stand before the judiciary authorities in order to prove that the allegations are malicious. He would do so if Dr. al-Khatib files a complaint in the manner provided by the law, instead of reiterating false allegations and resorting to such opportunistic methods in his election campaign. The following is text of Shaykh Fahd al-Sa'd statement on this matter:

"In a public speech during the opening of his electoral headquarters on Saturday evening, 12 September 1992, Dr. Ahmad al-Khatib accused me of calling at his home and the home of his brother, 'Iqab al-Khatib, after the liberation of Kuwait from the treacherous Iraqi occupation, and threatening to harm them."

Shaykh Fahd said: "First, may God be my witness that this is a false allegation and far from the truth, particularly since Dr. Ahmad al-Khatib was out of the country for a long time after the liberation. I do not think that if this incident was true he would have kept silent over it for so many long months."

He denounced the charge, which, he said, "harms my reputation and dignity and which Dr. al-Khatib fabricated for well-known electoral purposes." He added: "I was never a party to any dispute with Dr. al-Khatib or with anybody else. I never harmed him or anybody else. Indeed, I would stress that I cherish the ties of amity with my colleagues since my school days, Zayd and Fadil, [presumably sons of] 'Iqab al-Khatib, for whom I feel affinity.

Amendment of Constitution Called Most Important Task

92AE0678D London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Sep 92 p 2

[Article: "Gatherings See Amendment of Constitution as Most Significant Issue for Coming Assembly]

[Text] Kuwait—The question of amending the Constitution occupies such a big part of the election campaigns of a large number of candidates running for election to the Kuwaiti National Assembly on 5 October 1992 that one gets the impression that this issue will be one of the major points at which the Assembly will pause in this new phase of Kuwait's parliamentary life.

By observing the issues deliberated at election gatherings and the ideas and opinions expressed on the amendment issue, it can be concluded that Article 2 of the Constitution, which stipulates that "the state religion is Islam and the Islamic Shari'ah shall be a main source of legislation," will be the most important item in the campaign (if we may use the election term) to amend the Constitution, keeping in mind that unsuccessful attempts to amend this article have been made in the past.

Past Endeavors

In the 1980 election, according to Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti, chief editor of AL-MUJTAMA' magazine and a candidate in the eighth district, the "Islamic forces in Kuwait raised the slogan of amending Article 2 of the Constitution in order to confine legislation in Kuwait solely to the Islamic Shari'ah, instead of establishing the Shari'ah as a so-called main source."

Those forces were able to win the support of the overwhelming majority in the 1980 Assembly to debate this article of the Constitution. But for the second time in the history of the country's parliamentary life, they were confronted with the amir's rejection. The argument for the rejection, as al-Shatti explains, was that the phrasing of the article in its current form "allows the goal of applying the Islamic Shari'ah to be achieved by offering alternative laws compatible with the Islamic Shari'ah."

The liberal, nationalist, and leftist tendencies supported this conservative inclination [not to amend], thus compelling the Islamists to reconsider their calculations and to raise the slogan of applying the Islamic Shari'ah, instead of the slogan of amending Article 2 of the Constitution, in the 1985 election.

In next October's elections, this issue gains special importance, considering that the text of the "historic declaration of the future vision" of Kuwait after the liberation—a declaration signed by the various national, liberal, and leftist political forces—calls for applying the Islamic Shari'ah.

In one of his latest election rallies, al-Shatti disclosed that Kuwaiti political forces are debating a bill that they will submit to amend the Constitution in the pursuit of a clear vision on implementing the Islamic Shari'ah, greater political liberties and gains, and nonobstruction of parliamentary life.

It seems from the broad lines of the proposed bill, as disclosed by al-Shatti, that the demand for amendment will not be restricted to Article 2 of the Constitution, because the government, which carefully follows this issue, has responded to the sudden political consensus on applying the Islamic Shari'ah by forming a higher committee of legal and Shari'ah experts, most of whom advocate application of the Shari'ah, and has entrusted them with drafting a bill for complete application of the Shari'ah.

Article 174

It seems that Kuwait's Constitution, promulgated by the late Amir Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah on 11 November 1962, deals with the issue of its amendment or, as some people prefer to say, its revision, in Article 174. The final paragraph of this article states that after the Constitution has been enacted for five years, a proposal may be made for its amendment.

Article 174 also states, "the amir, plus one-third of the National Assembly members, shall be entitled to propose revising this Constitution by amending or omitting one or more of its provisions or by adding new provisions to it."

The article adds: "If the amir and the majority of the National Assembly members agree to the principle and topic of revision, the Assembly shall debate the proposed bill article by article. Consent by two-thirds of the members of the Assembly shall be required to pass the amendment.

"The revision shall not be valid until ratified and promulgated by the amir. If the revision proposal is rejected in principle or because of the subject matter of revision, it may not be resubmitted before the lapse of one year after the rejection."

According to the explanatory memorandum on the Constitution, the Constitution requires for its amendment, first, approval by the amir of the principle of amendment and, then, of the subject matter of the amendment. The Constitution also provides for a major right in this regard, namely the "right of ratification" in the full sense of the phrase, not just the right to object that is stipulated by Article 52 regarding ordinary laws. This article states, "the executive authority shall be assumed by the amir, with the Council of Ministers and the Ministers, in the manner demonstrated by the Constitution."

The explanatory memorandum notes that rejection in this case includes rejection by the amir or by the National Assembly and that the Constitution can be amended only with the consent of the two parties that had previously cooperated to establish it (meaning the amir and the nation).

The word of the Constitution reflects this lassitude when it states that an amir's decree shall be issued to ratify and promulgate the Constitution "in accordance with what has been resolved by the Constituent Assembly."

Amendment Tendencies

In another respect, Article 175 states, "No proposal may be made to amend the provisions concerning Kuwait's

amirate system and the principles of freedom and equality stipulated in this Constitution unless the amendment concerns the name of the amirate or further guarantees for freedom and quality." Meanwhile, Article 176 notes that the amir's powers, as stated by the Constitution, may not be amended during a period when another party is acting on the amir's behalf.

The tangible reality in the Kuwaiti arena, which is almost living in an "election rally" climate, is that there is no disagreement between one Kuwaiti and another on adherence to the Constitution, particularly to Article 4, which states, "Kuwait is an amirate hereditary to the progeny of the late Mubarak al-Sabah." The degree of opposition or support for the other articles of the Constitution varies, depending on the facts, the developments, and the struggle between the various political forces the arena is currently experiencing. This is the case regarding Articles 2 and 6, which constitute the axis of the activity of the political blocs. Other articles that deal with the mainstays of the regime and the system of government and administration of the country have attracted great attention from other political forces.

Regime and Administration

Ahmad al-Sa'dun, speaker of the 1985 National Assembly that was dissolved less than one year after it had been elected, said, "We in Kuwait disagree on how the country is managed. None among us demands change of the regime. We said in the past and we say today that there is no disagreement on what the Constitution says about the state being an amirate hereditary to the progeny of Mubarak al-Sabah."

Al-Sa'dun added, "But Kuwait, as a small country, will have no place unless it is firmly united. To achieve this unity, everybody is supposed to be given his right, meaning that every Kuwaiti citizen must have a role in managing and developing the country. Unless each party respects its obligation and its responsibilities, suspicion and conflict will persist."

By reexamining the explanatory memorandum on the Constitution, it becomes evident that Kuwait has adopted a middle-of-the-road compromise between the parliamentary and presidential systems, with a greater tendency toward the first. This tendency is intended, as the memorandum says, not to let the regime lose its popular character in parliamentary control or to offend our conventional tradition of consultation and of prompt comment on the system of government and the actions of the rulers.

The memorandum points out that these parliamentary virtues have not made the Constitution forget the parliamentary system flaws that have been exposed by the constitutional experiences and have not obscured vision of the advantage of stability, about which the presidential system feels proud. It says, "perhaps the source of ailment in the world's parliamentary system lies in joint ministerial responsibility before the parliament." It is feared that this responsibility could make parties engage in a relentless battle for power. It could even make the objective of attaining power a a main reason for joining this or that party.

The memorandum also says that to define the features of the middle-of-the-road course between the parliamentary regime and the presidential regime, the Kuwaiti Constitution has tried to achieve this harmony with the following dual system:

A. Establishing the Constitution as the cornerstone for ensuring stability in government, embodied in the following:
Establishing the amirate system as a hereditary system.
Stipulating that if the National Assembly adopts a no-confidence resolution, the entire cabinet shall not be dropped. This parliamentary rule is replaced by some sort of arbitration determined by the amir according to what he deems to be in the public interest in case he and the National Assembly decide that it is impossible to cooperate with the prime minister (Article 102).

B. The Assembly resolution on the lack of cooperation must be issued with the consent of a majority of its members (excluding cabinet ministers, Article 105). If all of these obstacles are overcome and if the National Assembly still resolves not to cooperate with the prime minister, the resolution shall not result in relieving the prime minister (and, consequently, the ministers), as is the case for an individual minister. In case of the prime minister, the matter is left up to the amir. If he wishes, he can accept the Assembly's opinion and relieve the cabinet, and if not, he can keep the cabinet and dissolve the Assembly.

In case the prime minister remains in power and the new Assembly resolves with the aforementioned majority not to cooperate with him, the prime minister shall be considered dismissed from his position as of the date on which the Assembly adopts its resolution, and a new cabinet shall be formed.

Al-Khatib Accuses Government of Assassination Attempts

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[Article by Hamad al-Jasir: "With Approaching Legislative Election Date, Kuwait Witnesses Concerted Activity; Candidates Deal With Domestic Issues"]

[Text] Kuwait—Kuwait's election campaign is getting hotter with the approaching legislative election date, namely the fifth of next month. Meanwhile, the country is witnessing extensive political and intellectual activity embodied in the dozens of rallies and lectures organized by candidates at their election offices.

Election rallies focus on domestic topics and issues, and speakers at these rallies touch on general Arab and Islamic issues that figured in past election campaigns. In their election presentations, some candidates emphasize

preservation of the Constitution, political reform, and developing government administration. Other candidates, such as Dr. Ahmad al-Khatib, have decided to open the dossier of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and to use it to criticize the political regime and to underline its mistakes.

Government Accused

Al-Khatib criticized the government severely when his election office was opened last week, accusing the government of trying to assassinate opposition leaders in the days following the liberation of Kuwait in February 1991. He went on to allege that Shaykh Fahd Sa'd al-'Abdallah, the son of Kuwait's crown prince and prime minister, threatened at the time to inflict harm on al-Khatib if he returned to Kuwait. Two days ago, Shaykh Fahd issued a statement denying al-Khatib's entire accusation and demanding that al-Khatib show the proof. Al-Khatib, however, has not commented on this denial. However, the rally he is scheduled to hold tomorrow, Tuesday, evening will most likely see the resumption of this verbal war that may enhance al-Khatib's election asset.

This development represents a part of the propaganda war that has begun in Kuwait with the escalating election campaign. Looming in the horizon are the signs of a confrontation between AL-ANBA' and AL-QABAS, two domestic papers, considering that the first has criticized AL-QABAS and accused it of bias in covering the election developments. The two papers had engaged in a similar confrontation last May because of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce election, which was won by the Economic Family list that was supported by the Kuwaiti opposition.

As part of the cultural-political activity, Kuwait University yesterday organized the first ever debate between representatives of Kuwait's seven unofficial political blocs. The debate dealt with issues pertaining to the Constitution, political action, and the opposition's role in the National Assembly (parliament).

A group from Washington's International Republican Institute will begin a visit to Kuwait tomorrow at the invitation of the Kuwaiti Society of Graduates. During the visit, Congressman Robert Lagomarsino, the Republican Institute chairman, will lecture on the issue of the "role of the responsible legislator." The day after tomorrow, the visiting delegation will deliver two lectures on the art of election campaigns.

In addition (AFP), the Palestinian issue has dropped to the bottom of the election platforms of some National Assembly candidates, especially those who had considered this issue pivotal in the previous Assembly. Meanwhile, the issue has disappeared completely from the action programs of the majority of the other candidates. No mention of Palestine is made in any of the election signs and posters filling Kuwait's streets and walls.

Muhammad al-Qudayri, a former diplomat who is close to the opposition Democratic Forum, has explained this by saying that none of the candidates "dares touch on the Palestinian issue in this election because he will certainly lose at the popular level. Candidates are focusing mainly on domestic affairs now."

Candidate al-Mud'ij Denies Representing Salafis

92AE0683D London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Husayn 'Abd-al-Rahman]

[Text] Dr. 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Mud'ij, candidate in the 12th district (al-Salimiyah, al-Ra's, al-Bid', Salwa) denied that he represents the "Popular Islamic Grouping" trend, known as the al-Salaf, in the National Assembly elections that will take place in October.

Dr. al-Mud'ij said he is an independent candidate and does not belong to any political group or bloc. This was his first reaction to a statement issued by al-Salaf group, after an official al-Salaf spokesman announced the names of the candidates that it allegedly supports. These included Dr. 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Mud'ij.

Al-Mud'ij's statement said: "Although I am honored by the announcement that al-Salaf group supports my candidacy to the National Assembly, for which I thank them, I would like to emphasize my position as an independent candidate who does not belong to any political group or bloc, although I fully respect all of the political forces in the Kuwaiti arena."

This morning, the election scene witnessed contacts between the candidates included in the list published by al-Salaf group, which has embarrassed some of the independent candidates, particularly the independents who depend on the votes of those who do not share the Islamic group's political inclinations.

A candidate told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that he was surprised by the announcement and that he does not know how to act because the constituency he is trying to represent includes voters belonging to competing groups that support him, but do not share the Islamic group's political views. The al-Salaf announcement will deprive him of those votes, he added.

The seriousness of the al-Salaf announcement of the candidates names lies in the fact that it was issued just before the Islamic Constitutional Movement, "the Brotherhood" [al-Ikhwan], held its press conference in order to announce the names of candidates it supports.

On another level, the first public debate between representatives of the various political groups and blocs almost failed when Khalid Sultan, representative of al-Salaf group threatened to withdraw from the debate if one more person from the al-Salaf group is not added to specialists who would be asking questions.

It has been observed that the Popular Islamic Grouping [al-Salaf], at the meeting held the night before the last, imposed preconditions on the subject of the questions that were to be raised at the debate, in addition to their being restricted only to specialist university professors.

Plans for the debate would have failed had it not been for Dr. 'Abdallah al-Shayiji's flexibility. He was able to ensure the success of the first experiment of its kind to be held in Kuwait at the headquarters of Kuwait University's commerce department.

Those who will participate in the debate include: Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti, representative of the Islamic Constitutional Movement; Khalid al-Sultan, from the Popular Islamic Grouping; Sayyid 'Adnan 'Abd al-Samad, for the National Islamic Coalition; and Dr. Ya'qub Hayati, for the 1985 National Assembly Bloc deputies.

The specialists who will ask the question include: Dr. Khaldun al-Naqib, professor of social studies at the college of arts; Dr. Ahmad al-Baghdadi, professor of political science; Altaf al-Sultan, on behalf of the al-Fatat Club; Husayn 'Abd al-Rahman, for the Association of Kuwaiti Journalists; 'Abd al-Latif al-Du'ayj, representing the writers association; Dr. 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Shayiji, professor at the Islamic laws college; and 'Amir al-Tamimi, representing the Kuwaiti Economic Society.

Vote Buying Said To Falsify People's Will

92AE0675A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Sep 92 p 3

[Article: "Vote Buying—Falsification of Will of Kuwaiti People"]

[Text] The problem of vote buying has affected the Kuwaiti election scene and become part of the daily talk of many candidates in various districts, after having been a subject for newspaper columnists and a means of accusation hurled by people on one side or the other.

This reaction seems to be on the increase. The government is being invited to use its resources, agencies, and laws to eliminate this phenomenon, which Sa'd 'Abbad al-Sawarij, a candidate in the 16th district, has described as "a conspiracy aimed at Kuwait and its future."

The movement in the press to halt the phenomenon is now being accompanied by a similar mass movement. The drafting of a petition has been announced in the district. Voters' signatures are being gathered for submission to Crown Prince and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah. The petition asks the government to take a resolute stand against the phenomenon of bribery and to combat it by various means. It also criticizes and condemns the vote buying in which some candidates are engaging.

At the festivities inaugurating his campaign headquarters, al-Sawarij distributed a statement condemning the phenomenon of vote buying and bribery. He said, "Silence about this phenomenon has come to resemble a conspiracy against Kuwait." He made it clear that vote buying began with the 1980 elections. The price of a vote then was 100 Kuwaiti dinars. As the phenomenon continued, the price rose, so that in the current elections the price is about 2,000 dinars in some districts and 3,000 in others.

He warned that "continued vote buying by candidates will raise the price to more than 3,000 dinars in the elections in the year 2000. This is a figure that no candidate will be able to bear. To guarantee an election victory, the 'bribery candidates' thus will be moved to rely on foreign funding, especially from the powers that have ambitions in Kuwait. In return for such funding, they will mortgage their seats in the National Assembly. The latter, in turn, will become an assembly mortgaged to foreign powers and a danger to Kuwait and its future."

Al-Sawarij had distributed a statement calling on voters to "counteract this phenomenon and bury it in its cradle because there is no guarantee that a deputy who buys his seat will not sell it whenever he can." He said, "The foul odor of bribery has emanated from some campaign headquarters in the 16th district. This obliges us to counteract this disgraceful phenomenon in order to defend the reputation of democracy in Kuwait, above all else."

He expressed his amazement and wonder at the government's position. "It prosecutes anyone who attempts to corrupt an official by offering him a bribe, but it does not prosecute anyone who attempts to corrupt the legislature by entering the Assembly through bribery."

Sa'd Bin-Tiflah, a candidate in the 20th district, likewise hoped that the Kuwaiti elections would take place in accordance with the law and with pronouncements by high officials that the elections should proceed with no violations of the law or of the democratic process in the country.

He spoke at a press conference that Mubarak al-'Adwani, a candidate for the 16th district, organized on the subject of election law violations. Al-'Adwani hosted his colleague Sa'd Bin-Tiflah at the conference.

Bin-Tiflah said that he was against no one in particular; rather, to him, all honorable men "emphasize their rejection of the moral decline practiced by a few people who harm the Kuwaiti people in the international press, particularly in the hostile Iraqi press, by the scandalously widespread practice of vote buying."

He said that fears about this phenomenon focused on nonadherence to Section 33 of the elections law, which mandates holding elections by secret ballot. He made it clear that public balloting is a violation of the elections law and that it influences the voter's free will.

Bin-Tiflah emphasized his great trust in the Kuwaiti judiciary, which has constantly been concerned about conducting elections honestly, without any suspicion or violation of the law.

He asked, "Can it be that the government does not know about the misdeeds taking place on the elections scene, such as vote buying, even though everyone from young to old in Kuwait knows about it? Can't the government counteract this phenomenon and combat it by sound application of the law?"

Mubarak al-'Adwani spoke next, saying, "The buying of people's integrity and consciences now taking place on the elections scene so that a small group can obtain seats in parliament is a falsification of the will of the people."

He said that "we implore the government to be committed to honesty in elections and we stress the importance of their promises to facilitate honest elections without any violation of the law."

He made it clear that he "and all voters and candidates concerned about the country's welfare will not hesitate to sound the alarm at the appearance of any flaw in the election process." At the end of the press conference, he demanded that punishments be strengthened for those who commit election crimes, whether they are candidates or voters.

Society of Graduates Emphasizes Security Concerns

92AE0678C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Jasim al-Shimri: "First Symposium by Society of Graduates: Constitutional Institutions and Joint Projects Ensure Security and Stability"]

[Text] Kuwait—Security was the subject of the first symposium organized by the Society of Kuwaiti Graduates in cooperation with the International Republican Institute as part of its contribution to enriching the debate during the election campaign period from 19 to 30 September 1992.

The symposium touched on the security concern and its ramifications to the reconstruction period. Ahmad al-Dini, Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti, and Nasir Sarkhuwwah participated in the symposium, which was moderated by Faysal 'Abdallah al-Misha'an.

Dr. Nasir Sarkhuwwah, a candidate for the 12th electoral district, emphasized the importance of security, of establishing security on a domestic and a foreign basis, and of the economic factor's role in security. He said that the "development and survival of societies can be accomplished only when there is a feeling of security and reassurance. Security is the concern of any society, and this concern is underlined when society loses its security. We in Kuwait have been aware of the importance of security before and since the brutal invasion because of the harsh circumstances we encountered prior to and during the occupation." He attributed the lack of feeling of security prior to the aggression "to the lack of political stability in this country because of the absence of a legislative authority and of constitutional institutions."

Dr. Sarkhuwwah noted that the invasion has had a special impact that "made us aware of the importance of security during the invasion period whose consequences continue to represent a daily horror because, to this moment, we do not feel secure, even though our country has been liberated." He added that "there are several elements that have a direct impact on security" and "we must examine these elements and learn how to deal with them."

He expressed the opinion that it is possible to divide these elements into three kinds: internal, regional, and international, adding, "to find out the best way to deal with these elements, there has to be cooperation between the people and the government, founded on mutual trust between the two sides. This cooperation must be based on the country's constitutional institutions. We cannot debate the security issue in subsidiary dialogues or in private get-togethers without commitment by both sides to this issue that is important to our country."

Sarkhuwwah added: "We are faced with two things. First, we do not want to feel that there is no security or that there is constant fear and anxiety in the country. We also cannot be reassured by the agreements concluded with France and Britain as the true guarantee for the country's security because such agreements change as interests change. Accordingly, we must look for other things to ensure this country's security."

He then touched on domestic affairs that "could be embodied in clear policies and just laws that evoke psychological relaxation among all members of society, be they citizens or residents." He said, "this can be accomplished only through stable and permanent institutions, led by the National Assembly because it is the most important of these institutions. The Assembly's work should not be impeded, and the Assembly should not be dissolved, as it has often been. The constitutional institution embodied mainly in the National Assembly is one of the guarantees of our country's domestic security."

He added, "One of the definite guarantees for any country is the presence of an independent judiciary authority that works to spread confidence in society with impartial and fair judiciary decisions for everybody, without exception."

Candidate Isma'il Shatti Speaks on Security Pacts

92AE0678K London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Sep 92 p 3

[Article: "Security Concern at Society of Graduates; Greater Coordination Between GCC Countries; Reliance on Intrinsic Capabilities to Protect Kuwait"]

[Text] Kuwait—The issue of Kuwait's security dominated a symposium organized by the Society of Graduates on occasion of the current election season, making it clear that hardship experienced at the hands of Iraq's during the invasion and occupation two years ago has left an impact that will continue to reside in the minds of Kuwaitis for a long time. This impact is reflected in the discussion of the numerous options and alternatives to ensure security and to avoid a recurrence of past events. The current election campaign offers candidates an appropriate opportunity to review the situation and present their ideas on the issue.

Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti has touched on the security issue and discussed the pacts Kuwait has concluded with the major powers, pointing out the kind of protection they offer. But al-Shatti expressed concern over the ability of these pacts to provide prompt support within a period of less than two weeks, plus the possibility of a change in the structure of international relations, which could have a negative effect on the pacts. Al-Shatti then proceeded to propose a number of domestic and regional alternatives to strengthen the international option.

Al-Shatti said that the first alternative from which one must proceed is to build up domestic strength by employing financial and human resources to develop the best security formula for defending the country according to realistic military visions, not according to theoretical political visions.

The second alternative is to move the Gulf military alliance concept from the theoretical context to a framework of practical application.

The third alternative is to develop the Damascus accord into a "symbolic presence" of Arab forces in Kuwait that would commit the forces of these governments to support Kuwait politically against any provocation and to threaten to use these forces to defend Kuwait in order to make up for the lack of the capabilities for prompt strategic movement that may be dictated by the circumstances at certain times.

The fourth alternative is embodied in the Western protection provided by the joint defense treaties. This is the best that can be secured now, and it must be used as a cover until the other regional defense alternatives are developed. Moreover, Western protection helps create the first alternative, i.e. "self-defense."

Al-Shatti asked if Kuwait can build a good defense force according to the first option and proceeded to note that the "answer to this question may be very protracted." But it is possible to define some of the important elements of military development:

First, we need to define a realistic and practical military and defense concept upon which one can gather the human elements and the equipment involved in building armed forces, can determine their organizational framework, and can draft the executive policies for them, along with a clear and precise vision of the tasks required of each military unit.

Second, we need to use the capabilities of the population as best as we can according to a well-studied defense plan. This requires a military service of an extremely special nature and very high-level military training programs. Everybody is complaining about the compulsory conscription system.

Third, we need to devote attention to the proper weaponry for the armed forces to give professional military men the task of determining this aspect and to remove the masters of corruption from the decisions involving arms deals. It can be said that weapons that offer high firepower and require small human crews to operate and maintain them are the best for Kuwait, even if they are exorbitantly expensive.

Fourth, we need to introduce a comprehensive change in the armed forces' commands, especially among high-ranking officers in the chief of staff and corps commanders who demonstrated their unworthiness, their abandonment of management of the battle, and their lack of ability to make decisions and to shoulder responsibility during the Iraqi invasion. Al-Shatti noted that the "average period that chiefs of staff or top military officers spend in their positions is 18 to 24 months, whereas this period in Kuwait is 10 to 15 years, unless circumstances dictate change."

Fifth, we need the presence of courageous political decision-making to move and make use of the armed forces.

Candidate Ahmad al-Dayn, representative of the Democratic Forum in Mushrif and Bayan area, said that the security pacts concluded with the major powers are vague and unclear and that they contain no reference to "deploying permanent land forces in Kuwait." Moreover, the pact concluded with Britain is no more than a "memorandum of understanding," and so is the pact with France.

He demanded that these pacts be debated in the coming National Assembly in accordance with the Constitution so they can be examined and issued by law. He warned that international relations are governed by interests. As an example, he cited the position of France, which was a friend of Iraq's. But when the balances and interests changed, France concluded a security pact with Kuwait, after the British and U.S. pacts had been concluded.

He noted that in his opinion, the sound alternative is a "secure, stable, and peaceful geopolitical environment that has two dimensions: A Gulf dimension and an Arab dimension." He noted that the Gulf dimension would be embodied in greater coordination among the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states—coordination "reaching the degree of a confederation"—while seeking to "preserve the local arrangements in every Gulf

country on the basis of the greatest degree of cooperation and of similarity and proximity between these countries."

Al-Nibari Calls for Economic Reform

92AE0678L London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Khalid al-'Abbad: "Call for Reexamining Economic Policy; Diversification of Sources of Revenue; Importance of Presence of Effective Management and of Fighting Corruption"]

[Text] Kuwait—'Abdallah al-Nibari, a candidate in the second district, has criticized the economic policy, saying that "it could lead our economy to numerous domestic and international financial crises. The coming Assembly must deal with the economic problems because of their importance in the Kuwaiti society."

At a rally held at his election office, al-Nibari noted that the "economy is not moving along a sound line. Compared with the recent past, the economic condition is worse, even though it is the backbone and pivot of political life. No society grows and develops unless it is under the umbrella of a flourishing economy. This rule applies to the Kuwaiti society in its capacity as an advanced society where the individual income level is high."

Al-Nibari added that economy has been the controversial issue in the U.S. and British elections and that the aim is to achieve full economic growth, to fight corruption, inflation, and unemployment, and to realize a fair distribution of income.

He then touched on the oil issue and on how the oil revenues are used at domestic and international levels to "accomplish the objectives that we aspire to accomplish," namely not to rely on a single source of revenue but to diversify the revenue sources in order to confront any future change and to "avoid all crises that we could encounter in the coming phase."

Al-Nibari criticized the "offhanded economic policy that has been moving involuntarily and by pure chance, thus causing the oil revenue surpluses to be invested in various fields and sectors in numerous countries, some of which have been beneficial and some useless."

He talked about the 1991-92 state budget deficit, wondering about the reasons for it, considering that expenses are much smaller than revenues. Al-Nibari also noted that the demographic makeup has been disturbed and that this is "sweeping away economic stability and creating a crisis. We may find solutions to this crisis if we consider the problem carefully and if we study it logically and rationally, and not according to our private interests."

Al-Nibari added that debts have drained a large part of the reserve set aside for the future generations, saying that this is Kuwait's most serious problem and that it must be solved in a fundamental manner. He criticized the faulty planning methods that have led to an increase in the unskilled imported labor, which has caused unemployment to proliferate and security to be lost and poses a threat to domestic stability. He appealed to officials to consider this issue because it is of special importance.

He also touched on boosting the economic activity and on containing the economic recession crisis that has faced Kuwait in successive periods.

Al-Nibari said: "Our oil investments have been moving from bad to worse because there are no planners working to find sound means to invest the money in nonoil areas. Moreover, the revenues of these oil establishments have shown losses. The reports highlighting the reasons for these losses have not been examined and evaluated to determine if they are sound. This is a task for the coming Assembly."

He added: "We know only a little about our foreign investments. According to the latest statistical report, published in 1986, investments amounted to $85 billion. This figure has increased now. If we take into account the liberation costs, amounting to $40 billion, plus other costs, then manipulation of the general reserve can be stopped." Al-Nibari pointed out that voters should elect the best candidate in order to secure opportunities for bringing the lax into account and for creating the best circumstances to plan a sound course for all sectors of this state.

Dr. Yusuf al-Ibrhaim then took the floor and discussed public finance issues and the absence of control in this regard, which has caused a "recurrence of many of the ills that had prevailed prior to and immediately in wake of the liberation, such as giving citizens loans and aid to develop Kuwait. In the past, these actions led to splitting the ranks, and this was demonstrated by the votes cast in previous elections."

He pointed out that the biggest problem that has faced Kuwait is the budgets "which have been drafted by government officials in a manner that does not clarify the source of deficit in these budgets. But the deficit surfaces clearly between one budget and the next."

Dr. al-Ibrahim added that the debt problem has affected the general financial reserve negatively and that "in light of all the losses that have been incurred by Kuwait, every Kuwaiti concerned with his country must seek to bring whomever manipulates public monies to task."

He further said, "in addition to the political will, there has to be an economic administration capable of expressing sound opinions and planning a course that can be followed so that we can learn from all the mistakes we have made, including our inability to invest soundly—an inability that has caused us to encounter problems with all the countries in which we have invested. There are numerous problems, the most important of which are with Spain, which tops the list."

Concluding, Dr. al-Ibrahim urged the following:

- Reexamining the general budget and the reserve.
- Separating the oil and investment revenues from the budget revenues.
- Giving the military establishment no budget separate from the general state budget on the pretext of confidentiality.
- Reexamining the foreign investments issue.
- Reexamining independent budgets.
- Developing a source of revenue to replace oil.

Election Observations

92AE0675C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 Sep 92

[Report on National Assembly election campaign: "Snapshots"]

[17 Sep p 3]

[Text]

- A voter asked one of the candidates about the secret of his friendship with government elements despite his strong opposition to them in general. He replied, "We are all tools of the government."
- A number of candidates are making use of the female element in their campaigns. They have assigned vans carrying their pictures and announcements to groups of women who tour the streets in their election areas.
- The withdrawal of candidate Rashid Sayf al-Hajilan from the elections was explained as a response to the withdrawal of candidate Salim Rajih al-'Usfur in favor of the alliance of candidates of "al-Hawajir" and "al-'Awazim" in the 24th district.
- The bond for a license to open an election headquarters (500 Kuwaiti dinars) is expected to be forfeited by most candidates in view of their having committed violations of the terms and regulations for establishing headquarters. One violation was that someone, while washing the main street leading to his headquarters, also sprayed the adjoining area with water. This was an infringement of the terms and regulations.
- There have been many incidents of ripping up candidates' pictures and destroying election signs. The war of breakage is expected to increase as election day approaches.
- Electronics equipment firms made election-related profits when many candidates moved to install television circuits to cover their election conferences and speeches.
- The war of cassettes has entered the campaign. Some candidates have begun distributing their election platforms on cassettes with their voice and their pictures.
- The National Assembly Secretariat has officially taken over the new Assembly building. The operation of moving employees and workers into the new building is under way.

[18 Sep 92 p 3]

[Text]

- The Ministry of Interior has decided to issue special identity cards to journalists who will cover the election on 5 October. The ministry has asked local papers to supply it with the names of the reporters they will assign to this task.
- In view of the enormous number of rallies, lectures, and candidate election office inaugurations, some papers have found it inevitable to welcome a summary from candidates on their activities because it is difficult to assign 300 reporters to cover this activity on a daily basis.
- Counselor Ghazi al-Sammar, the minister of justice and legal affairs, has announced the names of heads of the main and secondary committees that will supervise the National Assembly election.
- Yesterday, most circles tracked the reactions to the decision by the minister of interior to exclude several categories of foreign workers in the Ministry of Education and Army technicians from salary requirements for bringing their families into the country.
- Some candidates make it conditional that questions be submitted in writing during debates on their election platforms.
- Candidate Mubarak al-Duwaylah has said in his election rounds that Khalid al-'Awdah, a candidate in the 21st district (al-Ahmadi), will be the knight of the coming Assembly.
- One candidate has said that the vote-buying phenomenon takes more than one shape. A candidate has promised some senior citizens a visit to Syria and other voters, especially aristocrats, invitations to Geneva, London, and Paris. Other voters have been given promises of tickets to al-Ta'if, al-Dammam, and the venerable Mecca.
- A citizen in the old al-Jahra' district turned to a candidate to help him persuade a father who has refused him his daughter's hand in marriage to change his mind. The candidate went with the suitor and convinced the father, but he insisted that the marriage be concluded after the election, justifying his insistence by saying that it is "to guarantee the suitor's vote."
- Upon leaving a mosque, a citizen in al-Shamiyah area said, with hands raised in supplication, "O God, let every end of the month be an election day in Kuwait." When a bystander asked him about the reason for the appeal, the man said, "Every candidate is giving so much alms and charity these days beyond even what I deserve."

[20 Sep p 3]

[Text]

- After he finished delivering his speech at the opening of his election headquarters, one of the candidates expressed his readiness to fulfill requests and demands for services that his electors might need and called on them to come forward with their requests.

- The surprising thing was that he was flooded by requests, all of which were applications for Kuwaiti citizenship, since it has transpired that all those who submitted such requests are "bidun," who are stateless and, therefore, cannot vote in the elections, according to the current regulations.
- The register of candidates shows that 11 Kuwaiti lawyers are running in the elections. They are headed by Mishari al-'Usaymi, president of the lawyers association. They include Mubarak al-Mutawwa', 'Abdallah 'Abd-al-Ghafur, Hamad al-Jaw'an, Muhammad Dayfallah Sharar, Qulayfis Bin-'Akshan, Munayzil al-'Anzi, Dr. Ya'qub Hayati, and Ahmad Ghazi al-'Utaybi.
- A wide debate has been going on in certain elections headquarters and Kuwaiti diwaniyat [unofficial popular gatherings] regarding second district candidate Husayn al-Qallaf, who drew the Kuwaitis' attention by wearing a black turban.
- A candidate known on the electoral scene for his buying of votes is being assisted by key women to pressure on their voting husbands to sell their votes.
- The number of diabetes cases has increased among many Kuwaitis because of their excessive consumption of sweets at election buffets.
- Mubarak Sultan al-'Adwani, candidate in the 16th district, last night held a press conference on violations of the democratic system. The conference was attended by a number of local journalists.

[21 Sep p 2]

[Text]

- Commenting on the phenomenon of written questions addressed to some candidates, one voter has said that they are "questions concocted in advance" by the interviewer and the candidate. All that these questions need is to be flavored with a sprinkle of "spice."
- The Ministry of Interior has invited candidates to come and collect the final voter records [lists] for their districts this week.
- Observers of the course of the election campaign expect the Islamic tendencies to achieve superiority that will enable them to bolster their position in the coming assembly. Some observers have said that this assembly will have an "Islamist" character.
- Because the 25th district (Umm al-Hayman) continues to be uninhabited as a result of the destruction caused to its buildings by the occupation, its candidates look in all parts of Kuwait for voters registered in this district and feel uncertain as to where to place their election posters and pictures.
- Some candidates go through a prior "rehearsal" before opening their election offices so as to avoid surprises and gaps.
- A wealthy candidate liked the site of a poster of a rival candidate and offered to pay him 500 dinars in "key money" to remove his poster so that he, the wealthy candidate, can replace it with a gigantic poster.
- As a result of the crush of "rallies" held by candidates as part of their election campaign, a local paper has been compelled to allocate a corner with an interesting title, namely: "Where to Spend The Evening."
- Political forces await with interest what the Islamic Constitutional Movement will announce in its press conference tomorrow, including the names of its candidates and of other candidates that it will support.

[22 Sep p 3]

[Text]

- Today, the Kuwaiti Government will hold a special meeting that some people have characterized as one of its final meetings before its expected resignation after a new National Assembly is elected. It is expected that future special meetings will be held before 5 October, considering that the government is trying to accelerate the completion of some pending plans before it resigns.
- Some candidates have introduced "roses" to their election campaigns. It has been noticed that "election rose bouquets" have begun to pour on the editors of the local press election pages.
- The speeches of numerous candidates are characterized these days by an understanding of the voters. Their presentations encompass numerous sectors of the government and of society. But one candidate who lost the papers containing the text of his speech moments before he was to deliver it said, "It seems that a government mouse has stolen them."
- To emphasize that his address is politically hot, one candidate provides "very cold" drinks to his voters before he delivers the address.
- As soon as a candidate in one of the electoral districts completed his speech at opening his offices, the voters rushed to occupy excellent positions around the kinfafah [sweet pastry] trays so each could get his share before it ran out.
- The election office of one candidate is empty of voters, but a considerable number of children and office workers are found there. Congratulations.
- In one rally, a candidate went on too long with his speech. A member of the audience proceeded to ask him to hurry up so the audience could eat their dinner "instead of these words."
- One candidate wrote on his election poster that he is a "combination of all the candidates." A witty voter commented, "It seems that he is their father."
- Tea (samovars) of the (Badurayq) variety are the only thing on which candidates have agreed. It has been noticed that most of them have chosen this kind of (samovar) to use in their election offices, keeping in mind that there are other kinds of samovars known as al-Jabr and Ibn Mahfuz that have not become as popular.

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